Upsala College
Library

DISCARDED

DISCARDED

HISTORY OF ENGLAND IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

VOL. III

A

HISTORY OF ENGLAND

IN THE

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

BY

WILLIAM EDWARD HARTPOLE LECKY

VOL. III

NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
1892

AMS PRESS
NEW YORK

942.07
L461h
v.3

Reprinted from the edition of 1892, London
First AMS EDITION published 1968
Manufactured in the United States of America

122983

Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number: 68-57226

AMS PRESS, INC.
New York, N.Y. 10003

CONTENTS

OF

THE THIRD VOLUME.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Religious Revival.

Causes of the Undogmatic Character of English Theology in the Eighteenth Century.

	PAGE
Growth of physical science	4
Deism not popular among the higher intellects	5
Physical science not regarded as anti-theological	5
Imperfection of religious history and criticism	8
The Deists	10
Latent scepticism and growing indifference	11
Abandonment of extempore preaching	14
The observance of Sunday	15
Decadence of the Universities	18
Neglect of the Fathers	19
Arianism in the Church	20
And among the Dissenters	22
Hutcheson	23
Revolt against articles of faith	24
The better side of the theology of the time	30
Eclipse of Evangelical doctrines	31
Traces of religious life in the beginning of the century	32
Influence of Law	35

Methodism. PAGE

Its rise at Oxford 37
Early life of John Wesley 37
His first companions 39
Visits Georgia 41
His character at this period 42
Dissensions in Georgia 43
Return to England 45
Moravian influence 45
Conversion of Wesley 47
Visit to Herrnhut 48
Formation of religious societies 49
Missionary work. Conflict with the clergy 50
Erection of Methodist chapels 52
Whitefield begins field-preaching 52
The Wesleys reluctantly follow 53
Character of Whitefield 54
His position in the Church 57
His eloquence 59
His influence 65
Methodism separates from Moravian sm 67
Formation of a distinct society in 1740 68
Differences between Wesley and Whitefield 69
The Calvinistic secession 69
Institution of lay preachers in 1741 70
Missionary work 71
Persecution of the Methodists 71
Hostility of the clergy 74
Methodists accused of Popery 75
Religious terrorism. Physical manifestations . . . 77
Religious insanity 81
Asceticism 86
Belief in contemporary miracles 88
In witchcraft 91
In special judgments 92
Growing fanaticism. The earthquake of 1750 . . . 94
Moral failings 95
Intestine discord 97
Great effect of Methodism on the poor 100
Its progress in the colonies 101
And among different classes in England 102
In Wales. State of religion in the Principality . . 103
Griffith Jones 104
Howell Harris 105
Effects of Methodism in increasing Welsh Nonconformity 108

Methodism in Scotland 109
And in Ireland. Wesley's journeys there 110

PAGE
Influence of Methodism on the young 114
On the army 115
On the universities 116
On literature 119
On the upper classes 121
On the Church of England. *The Evangelical revival* . 124
Berridge 126
Grimshaw 128
Romaine 132
Other early Evangelicals 134
Estimate of the work of Wesley 135
His relations to the Church 141
Causes that detached Methodism from it 141
Later attitude of the Methodists 144
Effect of the Evangelical movement in stimulating philanthropy 144
In counteracting the revolutionary spirit 145
In mitigating the evils accompanying the growth of manufactures 146
Religious efficacy of its teaching 149
Summary of the evils that spring from it 150
Its severance from the intellect of the country . . . 151
Its Sabbatarianism 153
Its effects on the Catholic question 153

CHAPTER IX.

Difficulty of combining in fixed governments security and ability 155
Evils of elective monarchy 155
English type of monarchy 160
Requires the withdrawal of the King from active politics . 162
George III. the last English King who greatly influenced politics 166
His early life 167
Enthusiasm at his accession. His virtues 169
Evils produced by his personal policy 171

Circumstances that favoured his power.

Example of foreign monarchies 174
Ecclesiastical and legal tendencies towards despotism . 174
Extinction of Jacobitism. Growth of Tory sentiment . . 176

Scheme for destroying parties. Bolingbroke, Carteret, and Pitt 177
Adopted by the Court. Divided administrations . . . 178

PAGE

Position of the Cabinet 179
'Seasonable Hints from an Honest Man' 181
Magnificent position of England. 183
Divisions in the Government. The King's Speech . . 184
Bute and the Jacobites 186
Supply. Tenure of Judges 187
Changes in the Ministry 188
General election 190
Arguments for peace 190
Alliance of France and Spain. Policy of Pitt . . . 194
Resignation of Pitt and Temple 197
Pitt accepts a pension for himself and a title for his wife . 199
Conquest of Martinique and Havannah 203
Other victories 204
Resignation of Newcastle. Bute Prime Minister . . . 206
Negotiations for peace. Bedford 207
The Peace of Paris 209
Excessive requirements of Pitt 214
Unpopularity of Bute 216
Hatred of the Scotch 217
Character and position of Bute 222
Henry Fox 224
Gross intimidation 225
Literary patronage of Bute 227
Parliament approves of the peace 231
Its unpopularity in the country. Bute and Dashwood resign 231
Quarrel of Fox and Shelburne 232
Failure of the Tory Ministry. 233

Grenville Ministry (*April* 1763).

Temple and Bedford refuse to join 239
First contest with Wilkes. No. 45, 'North Briton' . . 242
Arrest of Wilkes under a General Warrant . . . 246
Pronounced to be illegal. Prosecution of the Messengers 247
Wilkes dismissed from the Militia. Prosecuted for libel . 248
Parliament orders the 'North Briton' to be burnt . . 249
The 'Essay on Woman' 250
Martin's duel with Wilkes 251
Popular support of Wilkes 252
Parliament votes that libels are not protected by privilege 254
Wilkes goes to France, is expelled and outlawed . . . 255
Multiplication of riots and libels 257

The Manilla ransom. Bedford joins the Government . . 258
Purchase of the Isle of Man 259
Party aspect of Grenville's Ministry 259
Relations of the King to Grenville and Bedford . . 261

PAGE
Resignation of Shelburne 264
The Regency Bill 265
Bedford attacked by the mob 268
Change of Ministry. The Whigs return under Rockingham, July 1765 270

The Rockingham Ministry.

Its weakness. Pitt refuses to join it 272
The King undermines it 275
Its dismissal 277

Conduct of Pitt towards the Rockingham Whigs . . 277
Questions on which he differed from Rockingham . . 279
His views about party. Good and evil of party . . 282
Degeneracy of parties under George III. Remedies of Burke 292

Ministry of Pitt.

Its heterogeneous character 294
Quarrel with Temple 296
Pitt accepts the Earldom of Chatham. Popular indignation 296
Rockingham refuses to see Chatham 298
The 'forty days' tyranny' 299
The Land-tax reduced by the Opposition 301
Resignation of remaining partisans of Rockingham . . 302
Failure of an attempted Northern alliance 303
Project of withdrawing the territorial revenue from the East India Company 304
Growth of the Tory element in the Government . . . 304
Chatham incapacitated by illness 305
Changes in the Ministry 308
Corsica becomes French 310
Plunder of the Duke of Portland 311
Growing ascendency of North. The King favours the Ministry 313

CHAPTER X.

The Middlesex Election.

Wilkes on the Continent 315
Stands unsuccessfully for the City of London. Elected for Middlesex, March 1768 317
Perplexity of the Government. King orders his expulsion 317
Wilkes freed from his outlawry 318

PAGE

Condemned for the 'North Briton' and 'Essay on Woman' 319
Great riots in London 319
Disturbed condition of the country 324
Resignation of Chatham 328
New provocations by Wilkes 329
His expulsion, February 1769. Opposed by Grenville . 331
Wilkes re-elected and pronounced incapable of sitting . . 333
Third election. Luttrell pronounced to be member . . 333
Great popularity of Wilkes 334
Arguments on the doctrine of incapacity 335
Petitions from the country in favour of Wilkes . . . 342
Renewed riots 343

Unpopularity of the Government. Corsica. The Falkland Isles 346
The King's debts 348
Unpopularity of Grafton 349
Weakness of Conway 350
And of Camden 351
Dismissal of Camden. New changes 354
Charles Yorke, his tragic end 356
Final resignation of Conway 358
Violent opposition of Chatham 358
Overtures to Rockingham 361
Triumph of the Government 364
Apostasy of Wedderburn 365
Despondency of the Opposition 366

Parliamentary Reform.

Extent of corrupt influence 367
The nabobs 369
Disfranchisement of Shoreham freemen 371
Inequalities of representation 372
Birth of English Radicalism—1769 372
Public meetings 372
Society of the Supporters of the Bill of Rights. Horne . 373
Instructions to members 375
Whigs compelled to identify themselves with Parliamentary reform 375
Views of Chatham about reform 377
Edmund Burke. His life, character, and genius . . . 381
Differs from Chatham 395
His conception of party 400
Dislike to Chatham's character 405
Extent to which he supported reform 407
His opposition to triennial Parliaments 408

PAGE

To a Place Bill 409
To instructions to members 409
To changes in the constitution of Parliament . . . 410
Consistency and nature of his Conservatism . . . 411
Distinctions between Whig and Radical 415
Objects of representative systems 419
Criticism of the views of Burke 428

Dangers to constitutional government in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries 431
Grenville's Election Act 436
Unsuccessful attempt to disfranchise revenue officers . 437
Curtailment of Parliamentary privileges 438
Growth of the Democratic spirit 440

The Press.

Its growing influence 441
The doctrine of libel 441
Changed character of newspapers 445
The 'Letters of Junius' 447
Problem of their authorship 463
Parliamentary reporting 476
Contest with printers 477
Estimate of the influence of the Press 483
Defeat of the Tory party due to its influence and to the American War 488

HISTORY OF ENGLAND

IN THE

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RELIGIOUS REVIVAL.

ALTHOUGH the career of the elder Pitt, and the splendid victories by land and sea that were won during his ministry, form unquestionably the most dazzling episodes in the reign of George II., they must yield, I think, in real importance to that religious revolution which shortly before had been begun in England by the preaching of the Wesleys and of Whitefield. The creation of a large, powerful, and active sect, extending over both hemispheres, and numbering many millions of souls, was but one of its consequences. It also exercised a profound and lasting influence upon the spirit of the Established Church, upon the amount and distribution of the moral forces of the nation, and even upon the course of its political history.

Before entering into an account of the nature and consequences of this revolution it will be necessary to describe somewhat more fully than has been done in a preceding chapter the religious condition of England at the time when the new movement arose. The essential and predominating characteristics of the prevailing the-

ology were the prominence that was given to external morality as distinguished both from dogma and from all the forms of emotion, and the assiduity with which the preachers laboured to establish the purely rational character of Christianity. It was the leading object of the sceptics of the time to assert the sufficiency of natural religion. It was the leading object of a large proportion of the divines to prove that Christianity was little more than natural religion accredited by historic proofs, and enforced by the indispensable sanctions of rewards and punishments. Beyond a belief in the doctrine of the Trinity, and a general acknowledgment of the veracity of the Gospel narratives, they taught little that might not have been taught by disciples of Socrates or Confucius. They laboured to infuse a higher tone into the social and domestic spheres, to make men energetic in business, moderate in pleasure, charitable to the poor, upright, honourable, and dutiful in every relation of life. While acknowledging the imperfection, they sincerely respected the essential goodness of human nature, dwelt much upon the infallible authority of the moral sense, and explained away, or simply neglected, all doctrines that conflicted with it. Sobriety, moderation, and good sense were their cardinal virtues, and they looked with great disfavour upon appeals to the feelings and upon every form of enthusiasm. The course of life which most promotes happiness in this life was represented as securing it in the next, and the truth of Christianity as wholly dependent upon a chain of reasoning and evidence differing in no essential respect from that which is required in ordinary history or science.

A great variety of causes had led to the gradual evanescence of dogmatic teaching and to the discredit into which strong religious emotions had fallen. The virulence of theological controversy had much subsided after the Revolution, when the Act of Toleration secured to most sects an undisturbed position; and the Nonjuror

schism, the abandonment of the theological doctrine of the divine right of kings as the basis of government, the scandal resulting from the adhesion of many who had held that doctrine to the new government, the suspension and afterwards the suppression of Convocation, and lastly the latitudinarian appointments of the early Hanoverian period, had all in their different ways contributed to lower the dogmatic level. At the same time the higher intellectual influences tended with a remarkable uniformity to repress mysticism, to diminish the weight of authority, and to establish the undivided supremacy of a severe and uncompromising reason. The principles of inductive philosophy which Bacon had taught, and which the Royal Society had strengthened, had acquired a complete ascendency over the ablest minds. They were clearly reflected in the sermons of Barrow. Chillingworth had applied them with consummate skill to the defence of Protestantism, proving that no system can escape the test of private judgment, and laying down with an admirable force the proper moral and intellectual conditions for its exercise. The same movement was powerfully sustained by the greatest writers of the succeeding generation. The tendency of the metaphysics of Locke, whatever ambiguity and even inconsistency there might be in their expression, was to derive our ideas from external sources; his unsparing analysis of enthusiasm was peculiarly fatal to all those systems of belief which elevate unreasoning emotions into supreme criteria in religion; while in his 'Letters on Toleration,' and his treatise on 'The Reasonableness of Christianity,' he maintained more directly the purely rational character of theological belief. Tillotson, who was long the great model of English preachers, was latitudinarian in his opinions, and singularly mild and tolerant in his disposition, and he set the example of concentrating public teaching almost exclusively on the moral aspect of religion.

At the same time the national intellect had been turned to the study of physical science with an intensity that had hitherto been unknown, and in a few generations the whole conception of the universe was changed. The discovery that our world is not the universal centre, but is a comparatively insignificant planet revolving with many others around a central sun, altered the whole measure of theological probability, and as the bewildering vastness of the universe was more fully realised, many beliefs which once seemed natural and probable, appeared difficult, incredible, and even grotesque. The conception of a world governed by isolated acts of interference began to wane. Each new discovery disclosed the wide range and uniformity of law, and the theory of gravitation proving that its empire extended over the most distant planet had a mental influence which can hardly be overrated. From this time astrology, witchcraft, and modern miracles, which a few generations before presented no difficulty to the mind, began silently to vanish, not so much in consequence of any controversy or investigation, as because they no longer appeared probable, no longer harmonised with the prevailing conception of the government of the world. At the same time, as the inductive spirit grew more strong, the difficulty of reconciling the actual condition of things with the scheme of Providence was more keenly felt, and it began to occupy a prominent place in literature. It appears in the sceptical writings of Bayle, and it was the subject of the 'Theodicy' of Leibnitz, the 'Essay on Man' by Pope, and the 'Analogy of Butler.

There was undoubtedly a large amount of complete and formal scepticism, but this was not the direction which the highest intellects usually took. The task which occupied them was rather to reconstruct the theology of the Church in such a way as to harmonise with the principles of government established by the Revolu-

tion, and, without weakening any of the bulwarks of morals, to rationalise Christianity and to reduce the sacerdotal elements to the narrowest limits. Locke, Hoadly, and Clarke marked out the line of action much more than Collins or Toland. The intensely political character of the English intellect was in itself sufficient to divert public opinion from views which threatened to convulse society and destroy existing organisations without exercising any practical benefit; and the Whig spirit of compromise, which became ascendant at the Revolution, extended far beyond the limits of politics. The habit of estimating systems not according to their logical coherence, but according to their practical working, is extremely valuable in politics, but it is not equally so in philosophy or theology, and it is remarkable how large a part of the Deistical controversy turned much less upon the question of the truth or falsehood of received opinions than upon the question of their necessity to the wellbeing of society. Latitudinarianism was favoured in high places. It led to great dignities in Church and State, and flourished in the midst of the Universities; but the Deist was still liable to some persecution and to great social contempt. He was vehemently repudiated by those theologians who laboured most strenuously to lighten the weight of dogma within the Church, and in the writings of Addison, Steele, Pope, and Swift he was habitually treated as external to all the courtesies of life.

It must be added, too, that few of the grounds upon which the more serious scepticism of the nineteenth century is based then existed. One of the most remarkable differences between eighteenth-century Deism and modern freethinking is the almost entire absence in the former of arguments derived from the discoveries of physical science. These discoveries had unquestionably a real though indirect influence in discrediting many forms of superstition, but the direct antagonism between

science and theology which appeared in Catholicism at the time of the discoveries of Copernicus and Galileo was not seriously felt in Protestantism till geologists began to impugn the Mosaic account of the creation. South, it is true, and some other divines had denounced the Royal Society[1] as irreligious; and Leibnitz afterwards attacked, on theological grounds, the Newtonian theory of gravitation, though he consoled himself, in one of his letters, by the reflection that it might furnish an argument for the Lutheran doctrine of consubstantiation.[2] John Hutchinson, a professor of Cambridge, who died in 1737, published a system of philosophy in 1724 and 1727, in which he assailed the Newtonian theory as tending to atheism, and endeavoured, by a large use of metaphorical interpretation, to extract a complete system of natural philosophy from the Bible. He founded a small sect of writers, who were called by his name. His principal followers were Bishop Horne, the eminent Scotch statesman Duncan Forbes, Jones of Nayland, and a writer named Pike, who published a treatise called 'Philosophia Sacra,' which appears to have had a considerable influence in the Dissenting bodies. But for the most part divines in England cordially accepted the

[1] See Perry's *Hist. of the Church of England*, ii. 445. Buckle, in his otherwise admirable sketch of the foundation of the Royal Society, has, I think, overstated the amount of clerical opposition it encountered. *Hist. of Civilisation*, i. 341.

[2] He writes to the Princess of Wales: 'Mr. Newton prétend qu'un corps attire l'autre à quelque distance que ce soit, et qu'un grain de sable chez nous exerce une force attractive jusques sur le soleil sans aucun milieu ni moyen. Après cela comment ses sectateurs voudront-ils nier que par la toute-puissance de Dieu nous pouvons avoir participation du corps et du sang de Jésus-Christ sans aucun empêchement des distances? C'est un bon moyen de les embarrasser—des gens qui par un esprit d'animosité contre la Maison d'Hanovre, s'émancipent maintenant plus que jamais de parler contre nostre religion de la Confession d'Augsburg, comme si notre Réalité Eucharistique étoit absurde.'—Kemble's *State Papers*, p. 529.

great discoveries of their time, and freethinkers appear to have had no suspicion that men of science were their natural allies. When Collins ascribed the decay of witchcraft to the growth of freethinking, Bentley retorted that it was not due to freethinkers, but to the Royal Society and to the scientific conception of the universe which that society had spread. Nearly all the early members of the Royal Society, nearly all the first teachers of the Newtonian philosophy, were ardent believers in revelation. Newton himself devoted much time and patience to the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy. Boyle established a course of lectures for the defence of Christianity. Probably the earliest public and important adhesion to the Newtonian philosophy was that of Bentley, who promulgated it from the pulpit in 1692, when preaching the first series of Boyle lectures.[1] It was defended against Leibnitz by Clarke, who was regarded as the first English theologian of his time. Ray and Derham, anticipating the method so skilfully pursued by Paley in his 'Natural Theology,' collected the evidence of design revealed by the scientific study of nature. Bishop Wilkins, who in his youth had been the defender of Galileo, was one of the earliest and most ardent supporters of the Royal Society. Its historian, Spratt, became an eminent bishop, and among its members was Glanvil, the ablest writer in defence of the belief in witchcraft. The story of the Deluge was believed to be conclusively proved by the fossil shells which were found on the tops of the mountains. If the chronology which limited the past existence of the world to about 6,000 years was occasionally impugned, it was only on the uncertain ground of Egyptian or Indian traditions, and it is remarkable that no less a reasoner than Berkeley pronounced that chronology to be essential to the faith.[2] The doctrine of evolution, which plays so

[1] See Whiston's *Memoirs*, i. 93. [2] See *Alciphron*, 6th dialogue.

great a part in modern science and in modern philosophy, was of course unknown. No modern philosopher indeed, has described more strongly than Locke the continuity of the chain of organisms extending from the highest to the lowest; but the only inference he draws from it is the probability of the existence of higher beings ranging between the Deity and ourselves.[1]

Nor was this neglect of physical science the only respect in which the Deism of the eighteenth century differed from modern scepticism. The 'Tractatus Theologico-Politicus' of Spinoza had indeed laid the foundation of rationalistic Biblical criticism; and Dodwell, in his treatise 'On the Small Number of the Martyrs,' had very recently furnished an admirable example of the application of acute criticism to historical documents; but as a general rule it may be truly said that critical history was still in its infancy, while comparative mythology was as yet unborn. The laws that govern the

[1] 'That there should be more species of intelligent creatures above us than there are of sensible and material below us, is probable to me from hence, that in all the visible corporeal world we see no chasms or gaps. All quite down from us the descent is by easy steps, and a continued series of things that in each remove differ very little one from the other. There are fishes that have wings. . . . There are some birds that are inhabitants of the water, whose blood is cold as fishes, and their flesh is so like in taste that the scrupulous are allowed them on fish days. There are animals so near of kin both to birds and beasts, that they are in the middle between both; amphibious animals link the terrestrial and aquatic together. Seals live at land and at sea, and porpoises have the warm blood and entrails of a hog, not to mention what is confidently reported of mermaids or sea men. There are some brutes that seem to have as much knowledge and reason as some that are called men; and the animal and vegetable kingdoms are so nearly joined that if you will take the lowest of one and the highest of the other, there will scarce be perceived any great difference between them; and so on till we come to the lowest and most inorganical parts of matter, we shall find everywhere that the several species are linked together, and differ but in almost insensible degrees.'—Locke, *On the Understanding*, bk. iii. c. 6. See, too, the *Spectator*, No. 519.

formation of opinions, the different degrees of evidence required to establish natural and supernatural facts, the manner in which, in certain stages of society and under the influence of certain conceptions of the nature of the universe, miraculous histories spontaneously grow up, the correspondence between the root-doctrines of different religions, the large amount of illusion which in these matters may coexist with perfect purity of intention—all these subjects were as yet undiscussed. Mohammedanism was invariably treated as a work of unmixed imposture. Buddhism was scarcely known even by name, and no less a writer than Waterland still maintained the old patristic theory that Paganism was the creation of demons, who had persuaded men to worship them as gods.[1] It was one of the many consequences of the exaggerated value attached to the ancient languages that the higher critical intellects were almost all absorbed in their study, to the great neglect of the most important questions relating to the history of opinions.

It is not surprising, under these circumstances, that the greater part of the Deistical controversy was very crude and superficial. The favourite topics were the improbability of a religion, intended to be universal, being based on a long train of perplexed historical evidence, and revealed only to a single obscure people: the moral difficulties of many parts of the Bible; the doubtfulness of the text, arising from the multitude of different readings and of apocryphal documents; the imperfection of the evidence from prophecy; the sufficiency of natural religion; the immorality of making rewards and punishments the supreme motives of virtue and of bribing the judgment by hope and fear. These topics were urged with no great power or skill, and there was manifested a strong sense of the incredibility of miracles, and a profound disbelief in the clergy, which

[1] See his *Charge to the Clergy of Middlesex* in 1731.

was largely due to their political conduct since the Restoration.[1] The frequency of pretended miracles in the early centuries of the Church was brought into relief by the 'Life of Apollonius of Tyana,' which was translated by Blount in 1680, and the whole question of the nature of inspiration by the pretended revelations of the French prophets from the Cevennes in 1706; while the speculations of Locke about the possibility of matter being endowed with thought gave rise to some materialistic thinking.

But on the whole the English constructive Deism of the eighteenth century has hardly left a trace behind it, and three only of the more negative writers can be said to have survived. Hume and Gibbon have won a conspicuous place in English literature, and Middleton—who, though a beneficed clergyman, must be regarded as a freethinker of the most formidable type—opened out the whole question of the historical evidence of miracles with extraordinary power in 1748, in his attack upon the miraculous narratives of the Fathers. With these exceptions English scepticism in the eighteenth century left very little of enduring value. Bolingbroke is a great name in politics, but the pretentious and

[1] 'Have you not for many years together heard the clergy preach up the Divine right and indefeasible authority of kings, together with passive obedience, as the chief distinguishing doctrines whereby their church approved itself apostolic beyond all churches? Nay, were not the doctrines of loyalty to the king insisted upon more than faith in Christ? And yet, when their particular interest required it, their doctrine of non-resistance was qualified by non-assistance—the whole stream of loyalty was turned from the king to the Church; the indefeasible right was superseded by a miraculous conquest without blood; the oath of allegiance to the Divinely rightful King James has its force allayed by another oath of the same importance to the *de facto* King William.'—*An Account of the Growth of Deism in England* (1696), p. 8. On the many rationalistic explanations of miracles that were current see Hickes' *Prefatory Discourse in Answer to the Rights of the Christian Church.*

verbose inanity of his theological writings fully justifies the criticism, ' leaves without fruit,' which Voltaire is said to have applied to his style.[1] Shaftesbury is a considerable name in ethics, and he was a writer of great beauty, but his theological criticisms, though by no means without value, were of the most cursory and incidental character. Woolston was probably mad. Chubb was almost wholly uneducated; and although Collins, Tindal, and Toland were serious writers, who discussed grave questions with grave arguments, they were much inferior in learning and ability to several of their opponents, and they struggled against the pressure of general obloquy. The history of the English Deists of the eighteenth century is indeed a very singular one. At a time when the spirit of the theology of the Church was eminently rationalistic, they were generally repudiated, and by the middle of the eighteenth century they had already fallen into neglect. But Voltaire and his coadjutors fully acknowledged their obligation to their writings. The arguments, so feebly urged in England, were reproduced in France with brilliant genius. They were advocated in a country where the national intellect is always prone to push principles without regard to consequences to their extreme logical results. They were directed against a Church which had neither the power nor the disposition to modify its theology in the direction of Hoadly or Clarke, and they contributed very largely to the triumph of the Revolution.

In England the course of events was very different. But although a brilliant school of divines maintained the orthodox opinions with extraordinary ability and with a fearless confidence that science and severe reasoning were on their side, yet a latent scepticism and a widespread indifference might be everywhere traced

[1] See Martin Sherlock, *Lettres d'un voyageur Anglois* (1779). Lettre xxii.

among the educated classes. There was a common opinion that Christianity was untrue but essential to society, and that on this ground alone it should be retained. The indifference with which the writings of Hume and of Middleton were received was as far as possible from arising from a confident faith. I have already in a former chapter quoted several illustrations of the sceptical indifference that was prevalent, and many others might be given. The old religion seemed everywhere loosening around the minds of men, and it had often no great influence even on its defenders. Swift certainly hated freethinkers with all the energy of his nature; his ridicule did not a little to bring them into contempt; he appears to have been quite prepared to suppress by force the expression of all opinions which he regarded as injurious to the Constitution in Church and State,[1] and several facts in his life show that he had very sincere personal religious convictions. Yet it would be difficult to find in the whole compass of English literature a more profane treatment of sacred things than 'The Tale of a Tub,' and one of his most powerful poems was a scandalous burlesque of the Last Judgment. Butler, in the preface to his 'Analogy,' declared that 'it had come to be taken for granted that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry; but

[1] I do not think that anyone who has mastered the general tenor of his political writings, will question that Swift expressed his deliberate opinion in the following passage. 'He [the King of Brobdingnag] laughed at my odd kind of arithmetic, as he was pleased to call it, in reckoning the numbers of our people by a computation drawn from the several sects among us in religion and politics. He said he knew no reason why those who entertain opinions prejudicial to the public should be obliged to change or should not be obliged to conceal them. And as it was tyranny in any Government to require the first, so it was weakness not to enforce the second; for a man may be allowed to keep poisons in his closet but not to vend them about for cordials.'—*Gulliver's Travels.*

that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious.' In another work[1] he speaks of 'the general decay of religion in this nation; which is now observed by everyone, and has been for some time the complaint of all serious persons.' 'The influence of it,' he adds, 'is more and more wearing out of the minds of men, even of those who do not pretend to enter into speculations upon the subject; but the number of those who do, and who profess themselves unbelievers, increases, and with their numbers their zeal. . . . As different ages have been distinguished by different sorts of particular errors and vices, the deplorable distinction of ours is an avowed scorn of religion in some and a growing disregard of it in the generality.' Addison pronounced it an unquestionable truth that there was 'less appearance of religion in England than in any neighbouring state or kingdom,' whether it be Protestant or Catholic;[2] Sir John Barnard complained that 'it really seems to be the fashion for a man to declare himself of no religion,'[3] and Montesquieu summed up his observations on English life by declaring, no doubt with great exaggeration, that there was no religion in England, that the subject, if mentioned in society, excited nothing but laughter, and that not more than four or five members of the House of Commons were regular attendants at church.[4]

As is always the case, the habits prevailing in other spheres at once acted on and were influenced by religion. The selfishness, the corruption, the worship of expediency, the scepticism as to all higher motives that characterised the politicians of the school of Walpole; the heartless cynicism reigning in fashionable life which

[1] *Charge delivered to the Clergy in the Diocese of Durham* (1751).
[2] *Freeholder*, No. 37.
[3] *Parl. Hist.* xiv. 1389.
[4] *Notes sur l'Angleterre.* He elsewhere says: 'Je passe en France pour avoir peu de religion; en Angleterre pour en avoir trop.'—*Pensées Diverses.*

is so clearly reflected in the letters of Horace Walpole and Chesterfield; the spirit of a brilliant and varied contemporary literature, eminently distinguished for its measured sobriety of judgment and for its fastidious purity and elegance of expression, but for the most part deficient in depth, in passion, and in imagination, may all be traced in the popular theology. Sobriety and good sense were the qualities most valued in the pulpit, and enthusiasm and extravagance were those which were most dreaded. The habit of extempore preaching almost died out after Burnet, and Tillotson set the example of written discourses which harmonised better with the cold and colourless theology that prevailed. Clarke, who was at one time much distinguished as an extempore preacher, abandoned the practice as soon as he obtained the important and fashionable pulpit of St. James's,[1] and the extraordinary popularity which was afterwards won by the sermons of Blair is itself a sufficient index of the theological taste. Voltaire, who was one of the most accurate observers of English manners, was much struck by the contrast in this respect between the English and French pulpits, and also between the English pulpit and the English stage. 'Discourses,' he says, 'aiming at the pathetic and accompanied with violent gestures would excite laughter in an English congregation. For as they are fond of inflated language and the most impassioned eloquence on the stage, so in the pulpit they affect the most unornamented simplicity. A sermon in France is a long declamation, scrupulously divided into three parts and delivered with enthusiasm. In England a sermon is a solid but sometimes dry dissertation which a man reads to the people without gesture and without any particular exaltation of the voice.'[2]

In the dark picture which was drawn up by the Upper House of Convocation in 1711 of the state of

[1] Hoadly's *Life of Clarke.* [2] *Essay on Epic Poetry.*

religion in England,[1] we find a complaint of a great and growing neglect of Sunday; but, as far as I can judge from the few scattered notices I have been able to discover, this neglect was very partial. In the upper classes the obligation of Sunday observance had undoubtedly been greatly relaxed, and the whole history of Methodism shows that a large proportion of the poor lay almost wholly beyond the range of religious ordinances; but the rigid Sabbatarianism of the middle classes, and especially of the Dissenters, was but slightly modified. By a law of Charles II., all hackney coaches were forbidden to ply their trade on Sunday, and although this measure gradually fell into disuse, it was for a short time enforced after the Revolution.[2] In 1693, however—greatly, it is said, to the displeasure of Queen Mary—175 out of the 700 hackney coaches in London were allowed to appear in the streets on Sunday.[3] Defoe, who usually represented very faithfully the best Dissenting opinion of his time, pronounced this measure 'the worst blemish' of the reign of William, and he complained bitterly that by the close of the reign of Anne 'all the coaches that please may work on the Sabbath day.'[4] Still, the severity of the observance was such that no less a person than the Chancellor Harcourt was stopped by a constable for driving through Abingdon at the time of public worship on Sunday,[5] and the travelling of waggons and stage coaches on that day was during the first half of the eighteenth century almost, if not altogether, unknown in England. Bishop Watson, in a letter written to Wilberforce in 1800, described it as an evil which had chiefly grown

---

[1] *Harleian Miscellany*, ii. 19–24.

[2] See Gibson's *Codex*, i. 240; and Lord Dartmouth's note in Burnet's *Own Times*, ii. 101.

[3] 5 & 6 William and Mary, c. 2.

[4] Wilson's *Life of Defoe*, i. 300.

[5] Campbell's *Lives of the Chancellors*, v. 409.

up in the preceding thirty years,[1] and it was probably due to the growth of the manufacturing towns increasing the necessity for rapid and frequent communications. At the time of the institution of the militia in 1757, it was proposed by the Government that the new force should be exercised on Sundays. It was important on account of the war that it should be speedily disciplined, and the ministers were anxious to interfere as little as possible with the private affairs of its members. The bishops appear to have made no opposition, and Pitt warmly supported the plan, but it created such indignation among the Dissenters that it was speedily abandoned.[2] Nearly at the same time we find societies of tradesmen formed for the purpose of denouncing to the magistrates all bakers who were guilty of baking or selling bread on Sundays.[3]

The complaints, however, of the neglect of Sunday by the upper classes were loud and frequent, and there can be no reasonable doubt that the tone of fashionable manners was in this respect very different from what it became under George III. 'It cannot escape the notice of the most superficial observer,' wrote an eminent Dissenter, 'that an habitual neglect of public worship is becoming general among us, beyond the example of former times.'[4] 'People of fashion,' said Archbishop Secker, 'especially of that sex which ascribes to itself most knowledge, have nearly thrown off all observation

---

[1] Watson's *Anecdotes of his Life*, ii. 113. Nichols says of a Mr. Goadby who died in 1808, that he lived to be shocked by the rattling of stage coaches on Sunday, 'which when he was a young man was in this country devoted to rest and public worship.—Nichols' *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, iii. 434. See, too, Andrews' *Eighteenth Century*, p. 165.

[2] Walpole's *Memoirs of George II.* ii. 100, 318. Stanhope's *Hist. of England*, iv. 89.

[3] Walpole's *Memoirs of George II.* iii. 98.

[4] Leland's *View of the Deistical Writers*, ii. 442.

of the Lord's day . . . and if to avoid scandal they sometimes vouchsafe their attendance on Divine worship in the country, they seldom or never do it in town.'[1] It was noticed that the behaviour of congregations, and especially of those members of them who were esteemed most polite and well-bred, had undergone a marked deterioration. The essayists continually complain that irreverence in church was fast becoming one of the distinguishing characteristics of such persons; that 'bows, curtesies, whisperings, smiles, winks, nods, with other familiar arts of salutation,' usually occupied their attention during a great part of the service; and that an English fashionable congregation formed in this respect a shameful contrast to Roman Catholic congregations on the Continent.[2] Sunday was rapidly losing with these classes its distinctively religious character. Cabinet councils and Cabinet dinners were constantly held on that day.[3] Sunday card-parties during a great part of the eighteenth century were fashionable entertainments in the best circles.[4] Sunday concerts were somewhat timidly introduced, but they soon became popular. Burney, who came to London in 1744, notices a certain Lady Brown, 'a persevering enemy to Handel, and protectress of foreign musicians in general, of the new Italian style;' who 'was one of the first persons of fashion who had the courage at the risk of her windows to have concerts on a Sunday evening.'[5] The influence of the Court under the first two Georges was not favourable to a strict Sabbatarianism. There were usually Sunday levees. Whiston complained bitterly of the irreverence shown by

---

[1] Secker's Sermons. *Works*, i. 114, 115.

[2] See *Spectator*, Nos. 53, 460, 630. *Tatler*, 140.

[3] Stanhope's *Hist. of England*, vii. 320.

[4] *Rambler*, 30; *World*, 179; *Connoisseur*, 109.

[5] Burney's *Hist. of Music*, iv. 671.

Queen Caroline at public worship, and Lady Huntingdon refused to permit her daughter to be maid of honour on account of the Sunday card-parties at Court.[1]

The universities, which were the seed-plots of English divinity, had fallen into a condition of great moral and intellectual decrepitude. The pictures of Oxford life by Wesley and Amhurst may be open to some question, for the first writer was a vehement religious enthusiast, and the second a professed satirist. But other authorities not liable to these objections fully corroborate them. Gibbon, who entered Oxford in 1752, tells us that the months he spent there 'proved the most idle and unprofitable in his whole life;' that except for the candidates for fellowships 'public exercises and examinations were utterly unknown;' and that college discipline was so relaxed that it can scarcely be said to have existed. The tutors, like the professors, grossly neglected their duty. There was no supervision, no serious religious instruction, no measure taken to enforce the attendance of the pupils at the lectures, or even their steady residence within the walls of the university. 'From the toil of reading or thinking, or writing, the fellows had absolved their conscience. . . . Their conversation stagnated in a round of college business, Tory politics, personal anecdotes and private scandal, while their dull and deep potations excused the intemperance of youth.'[2] The language of Adam Smith, who, like Gibbon, had graduated at Oxford, is equally emphatic. 'In the University of Oxford,' he said, 'the greater part of the public professors have for these many years given up altogether the practice of

---

[1] Horace Walpole's *Letters*, ii. 147. Whiston's *Memoirs*, ii. 172. Bishop Newton's Life, *Works*, i. 108, 109.

[2] *Autobiography*. See, too, for a very similar description of Oxford life in 1762–1765, *The Correspondence of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i. p. ix.

teaching.' 'The youth neither are taught, nor always can find any proper means of being taught, the sciences, which it is the business of these incorporated bodies to teach.'[1] The impression which the gross abuses at Oxford left on the mind of Adam Smith was indeed so profound that it led him in his 'Wealth of Nations' to exaggerate greatly the case against all educational endowments, and to underrate very seriously the benefits they may produce.[2]

Chesterfield, when writing to an Irish friend in 1749 about Dublin University, added: 'Our two universities at least will do it no hurt unless by their examples, for I cannot believe that their present reputations will invite people in Ireland to send their sons there. The one (Cambridge) is sunk into the lowest obscurity, and the existence of Oxford would not be known if it were not for the treasonable spirit publicly avowed and often exerted there.'[3] In 1729 the heads of Oxford issued a notice complaining of the great spread of open Deism among the students; and in the following year three students were expelled, and a fourth had his degree deferred on this ground.[4] In 1739 several students at Cambridge were convicted of a similar infidelity.[5]

The theological apathy which had fallen over the universities was probably one reason of the neglect of old theological literature, but the stronger and more abiding reason was that this literature was completely out of harmony with the prevailing spirit of the English mind. The spell of tradition and of Church authority was broken, and in an age wedded to inductive reason-

---

[1] *Wealth of Nations*, bk. v. ch. 1.

[2] See on this subject the remarks of Sir C. Lewis, *On Authority in Matters of Opinion*, ch. ix.

[3] Chesterfield's 'Letters to Madden.' *Miscellaneous Works*, iv. 100.

[4] Tyerman's *Life of Wesley*, i. 66.

[5] Monk's *Life of Bentley*, ii. 391–395.

ing and peculiarly intolerant of absurdity, writers who were once the objects of unbounded reverence lost all their charm. For many years after the Reformation the patristic writings continued to be regarded in the English Church with a deference little less than that which was paid to the Bible; but after the reign of Queen Anne they were rarely read, and the few who still studied them disinterred them only to subject them to the most unsparing criticism. The many absurdities and contradictions they contained had already been exposed upon the Continent by Daillé and Barbeyrac, and in England Jortin and Middleton continued the work with eminent ability and success. From this time the patristic writings fell into a complete contempt, from which they were only partially rescued by the Tractarian movement of the present century.

The only department of dogmatic discussion which retained a great interest was that relating to the Trinity. It was natural that an age very hostile both to mystery and to ambiguity should have revolted against this doctrine, and that divines who valued beyond all other things clear thinking and accurate expression, should have been keenly sensible of the extreme difficulty of drawing the fine line between Tritheism on the one side and Sabellianism on the other. For about three generations the subject stood in the forefront of polemics; and Arianism, or at least that modified form known as semi-Arianism or Eusebianism, spread widely among the divines of the Church. Without venturing to apply the term creature to the Son, without denying His preexistence, His participation in the Divine nature, or His part in the creation of the world, these divines were accustomed to make at least a broad distinction of dignity between the persons of the Trinity. They maintained that whatever pains may be taken to disguise it, the belief in three independent, self-conscious,

and coequal Divine Beings could be nothing but Tritheism; that to speak of 'the Father and the Son,' or of the Son as 'begotten by the Father,' is absolutely unmeaning and an abuse of language, unless the Being designated as the Father existed before the Being designated as the Son; that there is one unoriginated, independent, self-existing, and supreme Divine Being, and that there are two derived and dependent ones. The passages in Scripture which appear to speak of the subordination of the Son to the Father were continually dwelt on, and it was contended that what is termed the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity was never formulated till the Council of Nice, and is mainly based on a text which is notoriously a forgery. In the reign of Queen Anne when patristic studies were still in vogue, the controversy was chiefly carried on in that field, and Bishop Bull obtained the singular honour of a vote of thanks from the French Bishops, headed by Bossuet, for his defence of the orthodoxy of the Ante-Nicene Fathers. Under Waterland, South, Sherlock, and Clarke the controversy assumed a more popular character, and spread widely through all classes.[1] In the beginning of the reign of George I. the Government, fearing the political consequences of theological agitation, issued directions to the Archbishops and Bishops for restraining all novelties of expression and all violent discussion on the subject, but the measure seems to have had little result.[2] Not only divines of great ability, but even prelates of the Church,

[1] Waterland says: 'The controversy about the Trinity is now spread abroad among all ranks and degrees of men with us, and the Athanasian Creed become the subject of common and ordinary conversation.' – Introduction to the *Hist. of the Athanasian Creed.* Lady Cowper gives an amusing account of the vehemence of the discussion in Court circles. *Diary*, pp. 17–19. See, too, Buckle's *Hist. of Civilisation*, i. 389, 390.

[2] Debarry's *Hist. of the Church of England*, pp. 458–460.

were gravely suspected of leanings to Arianism. The charge was frequently brought against Hoadly, and at a later period against Law, the Bishop of Carlisle, though in each case it appears to rest rather upon omissions in their teaching and upon the sympathies they showed than upon any distinctly heretical statement. Rundle, a friend of Whiston and Clarke, and for some time the domestic chaplain of Bishop Talbot, was accused of a latent Deism; and Bishop Gibson, on that ground, prevented him from obtaining the bishopric of Gloucester, but in 1735 he was presented to the see of Derry, which he is said to have adorned with many virtues. Clayton, who for nearly thirty years occupied a place in the Irish Episcopate, openly attacked Athanasianism, moved in the Irish House of Lords in 1756 that the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds should be expunged from the Prayer Book, and was at last threatened with a prosecution in 1757. He died in the following year, while the case was still pending, and his death was generally attributed to the anxiety he underwent.[1]

Among the Dissenters, and especially among the Presbyterians and in the seminaries, Arianism, in many cases slowly deepening into Socinianism, was still more widely spread. An able school of Arian teachers arose among the Dissenting ministers of Exeter about 1717, and their views advanced rapidly over Devonshire and Cornwall, and gradually extended to the metropolis.[2] A similar doctrine took deep root in Edinburgh, and it was especially prominent in the University of Glasgow, where many of the Presbyterian ministers of Scotland and

[1] Bishop Clayton's speech has been reprinted, and much curious information collected about the bishop and his contemporaries, in a pamphlet called *Bishop Clayton on the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds*, by a Vicar of the Church of Ireland (Dublin, 1876).

[2] Calamy's *Life*, ii. 404–417. Wilson's *Hist. of the Dissenting Churches*. Bogue and Bennett's *Hist. of the Dissenters*, ii. 168–178.

most of those of Ireland were educated. The chair of theology at Glasgow from 1708 to 1729 was held by Simson, one of the ablest of the party, and for two generations that of Edinburgh was occupied by divines who at least countenanced Arianism by the omissions in their teaching. Simson, after a long period of litigation, was censured and suspended from his ministerial functions, but the hesitation or indulgence shown by the General Assembly in its dealings with him was one great cause of the secession of the Associate Presbytery in 1733.[1] Though inspired by the most intense and narrow orthodoxy, this secession was a symptom of the growth of the opposite spirit, for it was essentially a protest against the increasing laxity, both in dogma and practice, which was displayed by some sections of the Scotch Presbyterians. The liberal movement was greatly strengthened by Francis Hutcheson, who held the Chair of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow from 1729 till his death in 1747. Hutcheson adopted for the first time the custom of lecturing in English, and his eloquence, his zeal, and his singularly attractive character combined with his high philosophical reputation to give him a complete ascendency over the students. He formed an intellectual atmosphere in which the old theological conceptions of God and of the Universe silently faded. Teaching that all virtues are modes of benevolence, he exalted the amiable qualities in man to a dignity altogether inconsistent with the Calvinistic theory of human nature, while his admirable expositions of the function of beauty in the moral world, as well as his strong assertion of the existence and supreme authority of a moral sense in man, struck at the root of the hard asceticism and the systematic depreciation of human nature which were so deeply ingrained in the

[1] Burton's *Hist. of Scotland since the Revolution*, ii. 314–335.

Scottish Kirk. Without impugning any theological doctrine, he never concealed his dislike and his contempt for dogmatic discussions and definitions, and he encouraged the divinity students, over whom he exercised an especial influence, to drop them altogether from their sermons. His indirect influence was very great, both in Scotland and in Ireland; and among the Presbyterians of Ulster, after about the middle of the eighteenth century, Arian, or, as they were called, 'New Light' opinions were completely in the ascendant.[1]

Accompanying these tendencies, we find a growing repugnance to articles of faith. This, like the preceding movement, appeared almost equally among Churchmen and Dissenters. Among the latter an important movement against subscription arose in connection with the Exeter controversy, and at a great meeting held at Salters' Hall, in 1719, the Dissenting ministers decided by a small majority not to meet the growing heresy by a test.[2] At a still earlier period, Abernethy, in conjunction with a small group of friends, founded in Ireland 'The Belfast Society,' whose members taught that the first conditions of acceptance with the Deity are moral virtues and sincere conviction; that the honest error of a good man can never exclude from salvation; that positive doctrines are either uncertain or non-essential, and that Churches have no right to require

[1] See Reid's *Hist. of the Irish Presbyterians*, v. 111. Porter's *Life of Cooke*, pp. 37–41. When a young man, Hutcheson once occupied his father's pulpit, and his latitudinarianism is said to have driven the rigid congregation from the meeting-house. 'Your silly son Frank,' said one of the elders to his father, 'has fashed a' the congregation wi' his idle cackle; for he has been babbling this oor aboot a gude and benevolent God, and that the souls of the heathen themsels will gang to heaven if they follow the licht of their ain consciences. Not a word does the daft boy ken, speer nor say aboot the gude, comfortable doctrines of election, reprobation, original sin, and faith. Hoot man, awa wi sic a fellow.' Reid, iii. 406.

[2] Calamy's *Life*, ii. 404.

subscription to human formularies.[1] In the Anglican Church Hoadly, in 1720, raised the famous Bangorian controversy by a sermon on the kingdom of Christ, in which—following out a line of argument which he had already laid down in his 'Preservative against the Principles of the Nonjurors'—he struck a severe blow, not only against the theory of apostolical succession and of a visible and divinely constituted Church, but also against the whole system of authoritative confessions of faith.[2] His principles spread far and fast. A deep conviction of the duty of a disinterested and unbiassed search for truth, of the innocence of honest error, and of the evil of all attempts to deflect the judgment by hope or fear, or to prescribe the conclusions at which it must arrive, characterised that small body of divines who took their principles from Locke and Chillingworth, and it is the best feature of eighteenth-century theology. The letter of Hare, Bishop of Chichester, 'to a young clergyman on the difficulties and discouragements in the study of Scripture,' is a curious example of the language on this subject which could be employed by a man who was actually raised to two bishoprics, and who was even thought of for the see of Canterbury. He strongly justified the writings of Whiston and Clarke on the Trinity, and maintained that the absence of real liberty of discussion among the clergy was the great obstacle to the serious study of Scripture. 'The man,' he added, 'whose study of the Scriptures has betrayed him into a suspicion of some heretical opinions, must be blackened and defamed . . . insulted by every worthless wretch as if he had as little learning and virtue as the lowest of those who are against him. . . . Orthodoxy will cover a multitude of sins, but a cloud of virtues

[1] *Hist. of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, i. 437. *of England in the Eighteenth Century*, i. 312, 313.

[2] See on this controversy, *Hist.*

cannot cover the want of the minutest particle of orthodoxy. It is expected, no matter how unreasonably, that a man should always adhere to the party he has once taken. It is the opinion of the world that he is all his life bound by the subscriptions he made in his first years, as if a man were as wise at twenty-four, and knew as much of the Scriptures and antiquity, and could judge as well of them as he can at fifty. 'Name me any one,' he continued, 'of the men famed for learning in this or the last age who have seriously turned themselves to the study of Scripture. And what is it that all this can be imputed to? . . . To be plain, the one thing which turned them from so noble a study was the want of liberty, which in this study only is denied men. . . . A happy emendation on a passage in a pagan writer that a modest man would blush at, will do you more credit and be of greater service to you than the most useful employment of your time upon the Scriptures, unless you resolve to conceal your sentiments and speak always with the vulgar.'

The influence of this wave of thought was shown in the latitude admitted in the interpretation of the Articles. A very considerable latitude may indeed be amply justified. The Church of England is a national Church, which can only mean a representative Church, representing, as far as possible, the forms of religious belief existing in the country. When its constitution was framed, English Protestants were divided into two widely different sections, the one leaning in most things towards Catholicism, while the other was substantially Puritan. The Church was intended to comprise them both. The Prayer Book was a compromise framed for the purpose of comprehension and peace. Ambiguities of expression were intentionally introduced into it, and its double origin is clearly reflected in the conflicting tendencies of its parts. The Church was designed to be

a State Church, including the whole nation, governed by the national legislature, and disposing of vast revenues for national purposes. It may reasonably, therefore, be concluded that those who interpret its formularies in the widest and most comprehensive sense compatible with honesty are acting most faithfully to the spirit of its founders. It was argued, too, that a Church which proclaimed herself liable to err, which took her stand upon the right of private judgment, and not only repudiated the Roman claim to infallibility, but even declared that all preceding Churches actually had erred, could hardly be understood to claim for herself a complete exemption from error in all the many and complicated dogmatic questions on which she had pronounced. Were it otherwise, the advocacy of private judgment would be a mockery, and Steele would have been right when he maintained that the difference between the Roman and the Anglican Churches was merely that the former claimed to be infallible and the latter to be always right. Some divines contended that the Articles might be assented to in any sense they could grammatically bear; others that any person may agree to them if he can in any sense at all reconcile them with Scripture; others that nothing was required but a general acquiescence in their substantial truth; others that they were merely articles of peace, and that the sole duty of the clergyman was to abstain from attacking the doctrines they assert; others that it was sufficient if the clergyman believed them at the time when he was asked to sign them.

The practice of compelling boys fresh from school, on their arrival at the University, to subscribe them, and the exaction of a similar subscription at every stage of a University career, destroyed almost all sense of the solemnity and the reality of the obligation. Signing the Articles came to be looked upon as a mere antiquated official form,

like the obligation of assenting to certain perfectly obsolete statutes, which was long maintained in at least one of our universities. The general disappearance of dogma from popular teaching, and the fact that the clergy were almost universally Arminian while the tendency of the Articles was clearly Calvinistic, contributed to this state of mind. It was contended that what was called the Arian subscription was at least as tenable as the Arminian one. Whiston, it is true, so boldly urged his Arian principles that he lost his professorship at Cambridge; and Lindsey and a few other clergymen resigned their preferments on account of their Arian or Socinian views; but many others acted with far less boldness. Clarke, when censured by Convocation for his work on the Trinity, merely promised to write no more on the subject. He refused a bishopric on the ground that it would oblige him again to sign the Articles, but he retained, apparently without scruple, his vicarage of St. James.[1] Lord King was quoted as justifying subscription to the Articles when unaccompanied by belief, on the ground that 'we must not lose our usefulness for scruples.'[2] A shameful letter, written in 1736, by no less a person than Middleton, is preserved, treating with the utmost ridicule the Articles at the very time when the writer was signing them in order to take possession of a living.[3] Hume, when con-

[1] Walpole's *Last Journals*, i. 8–12.

[2] Whiston's *Memoirs*, i. 162.

[3] 'These slumberers in stalls suspect one very unjustly of ill designs against their peace, for though there are many things in the Church that I wholly dislike, yet whilst I am content to acquiesce in the ill, I should be glad to taste a little of the good, and to have some amends for that ugly assent and consent which no man of sense can approve of. We read of some of the earliest disciples of Christ who followed him, not for his works, but his loaves. These are certainly blameable because they saw his miracles, but to us who had not the happiness to see the one, it may be allowable to have some inclination to the other. Your Lordship knows a

sulted by a friend on the question whether a young clergyman whose opinions had become profoundly sceptical should remain in the Church and accept its preferments, answered decidedly in the affirmative. 'Civil employments for men of letters,' he said, 'can scarcely be found. . . . It is putting too great a respect on the vulgar and on their superstitions to pique oneself on sincerity with regard to them. Did ever one make it a point of honour to speak the truth to children or madmen? . . . The ecclesiastical profession only adds a little more to an innocent dissimulation, or rather simulation, without which it is impossible to pass through the world.'[1] It is not surprising that 'The Confessional' of Archdeacon Blackburne, which appeared in 1766, and which was directed against the whole system of clerical subscription, should have excited a wide interest and exercised a considerable influence. Many of the ablest pens in the Church were employed upon the subject,[2] and in 1772 a considerable body of clergymen, in conjunction with some eminent laymen, petitioned Parliament to be relieved from the burden of subscription.

The grave defects of the religious condition I have described are very evident, and have been abundantly

---

certain prelate who, with a very low notion of the Church's sacred bread, has a very high relish for, and a very large share of the temporal. My appetite for each is equally moderate, and would be satisfied almost with anything but mere emptiness. I have no pretensions to riot in the feast of the elect, but with the sinner in the Gospel to gather up the crumbs that fall from the table.'—To Lord Hervey. Nichols' *Literary Anecdotes*, v. 421, 422.

[1] Burton's *Life of Hume*, ii. 187, 188.

[2] In the *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1780, there is a catalogue of the writers in the controversies occasioned by the publication of the *Confessional*, and by the presentation of the clerical petition in 1772. It comprises seventy-nine names. See, too, on this subject Belsham's *Life of Lindsey*; Whiston's *Memoirs*; Doddridge's *Diary*, vol. v.; Lindsey's *Historical View*.

recognised. Yet cold, selfish, and unspiritual as was the religion of England from the Revolution till the Methodist movement had pervaded the Establishment with its spirit, it was a period that was not without its distinctive excellences. It was a period when many superstitions profoundly injurious to human happiness perished or decayed. It was a period when among the higher divines there were several who followed the lead of Hoadly, and warmly, steadily, and ably fought the battle of liberty and toleration in every field. It was a period when theological teaching was at least eminently practical, was characterised by a rare moderation and good sense, and was singularly free from everything that was fanatical, feverish, or mystical. The Church made it her peculiar mission to cultivate the decencies of life, to inculcate that ordered, practical, and measured virtue which is most conducive to the welfare of nations. The interests of men in this world were never lost sight of. The end of the preacher was to make good and happy men. The motives to which he appealed were purely rational. There were few saints, but among the higher clergy we find many who combined with unusually enlightened and tolerant judgments a very high degree of amiable and unobtrusive piety. There was little dogmatic exposition and still less devotional literature, but the assaults of the Deists were met with masterly ability. The attempt, indeed, which Pascal had made in the preceding century to establish Christianity on spiritual intuitions, and on the harmony of Revelation with the wants and conditions of our nature, was almost abandoned, but the evidences of Christianity were elaborated with a skill and power that had never before been equalled. In very few periods do we find so much good reasoning, or among the better class of divines so sincere a love of truth, so perfect a confidence that their faith had nothing to fear from the fullest and

most searching investigation. To this period belong the 'Alciphron' of Berkeley, the 'Analogy' of Butler, the defence of natural and revealed religion by Clarke, the 'Credibility of the Gospels' by Lardner, as well as the 'Divine Legation' of Warburton, and the evidential writings of Sherlock, Leslie, and Leland. The clergy, as a rule, made little pretension to the prerogatives of a sacerdotal caste. Those of the great cities were often skilful and masculine reasoners. The others were small country gentry, slightly superior to their neighbours in education and moral conduct, discharging the official duties of religion, but mixing, without scruple and without question, in country business and in country sports. Their standard was low. Their zeal was very languid, but their influence, such as it was, was chiefly for good.

That in such a society a movement like that of Methodism should have exercised a great power is not surprising. The secret of its success was merely that it satisfied some of the strongest and most enduring wants of our nature which found no gratification in the popular theology, that it revived a large class of religious doctrines which had been long almost wholly neglected. The utter depravity of human nature, the lost condition of every man who is born into the world, the vicarious atonement of Christ, the necessity to salvation of a new birth, of faith, of the constant and sustaining action of the Divine Spirit upon the believer's soul, are doctrines which in the eyes of the modern Evangelical constitute at once the most vital and the most influential portions of Christianity, but they are doctrines which during the greater part of the eighteenth century were seldom heard from a Church of England pulpit. The moral essays which were the prevailing fashion, however well suited they might be to cultivate the moral taste, or to supply rational motives

to virtue, rarely awoke any strong emotions of hope, fear, or love, and were utterly incapable of transforming the character and arresting and reclaiming the thoroughly depraved.

It is, of course, not to be supposed that spiritual or evangelical religion was absolutely extinct. As long as the Bible and Prayer Book were read, as long as the great devotional literature of the past remained, this was wholly impossible. The Independents are said to have been attached more generally to evangelical doctrines than any other sect, and in the Church of England itself we may find some traces of a more active religious life. They were, however, chiefly in the last years of the seventeenth century and the first quarter of the eighteenth century. The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge was founded by a few private gentlemen in 1696. It began that vast dissemination of tracts, Prayer Books, and Bibles which still forms so prominent a feature of English life, encouraged the employment and education of the poor, and discharged several other functions of mercy. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts was at first one of its branches, but it became a separate organisation in 1701. One of the most important functions of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge was the establishment of charity schools, which multiplied rapidly under Anne. 'I have always looked on the institution of charity schools,' wrote Addison, 'which of late years has so universally prevailed through the whole nation, as the glory of the age we live in.'[1] The clergy actively supported them. The movement for establishing them was stimulated by the accounts of a somewhat similar movement that had been going on at Halle. In the fifteen years ending in 1712 as many as

[1] *Guardian*, No. 105.

117 schools were set up in London and Westminster, and nearly 5,000 children were taught in them.[1] A large proportion of the endowed schools now existing in England owe their origin to the enthusiasm for education in this period.[2]

The corruption of manners which had been general since the Restoration was combated by societies for 'the Reformation of Manners,' which in the last years of the seventeenth century acquired extraordinary dimensions. They began in certain private societies which arose in the reign of James II., chiefly under the auspices of Beveridge and Bishop Horneck. These societies were at first purely devotional, and they appear to have been almost identical in character with those of the early Methodists. They held prayer-meetings, weekly communions, and Bible-readings; they sustained charities and distributed religious books, and they cultivated a warmer and more ascetic type of devotion than was common in the Church. Societies of this description sprang up in almost every considerable city in England and even in several of those in Ireland. In the last years of the seventeenth century we find no less than ten of them in Dublin. Without, however, altogether discarding their first character, they assumed, about 1695, new and very important functions. They divided themselves into several distinct groups, undertaking the discovery and suppression of houses of ill-fame, and the prosecution of swearers, drunkards, and Sabbath-breakers. They became a kind of voluntary police,

[1] Secretan's *Life of Nelson*, pp. 118–122. See, too, Wilson's *Life of Defoe*, i. 298, and Tyerman's *Life of Wesley*, i. 63.

[2] Ninety-six grammar schools were founded in England from 1684 to 1727. Of endowed schools for the poor there were seventy distinct foundations established in London and its immediate vicinity during the same period, besides great numbers in other parts of the country.—Routledge's *Hist. of Popular Progress*, pp. 53, 54.

acting largely as spies, and enforcing the laws against religious offences. The energy with which this scheme was carried out is very remarkable. As many as seventy or eighty persons were often prosecuted in London and Westminster for cursing and swearing, in a single week. Sunday markets, which had hitherto been not uncommon, were effectually suppressed. Hundreds of disorderly houses were closed. Forty or fifty night-walkers were sent every week to Bridewell, and numbers were induced to emigrate to the colonies. A great part of the fines levied for these offences was bestowed on the poor. In the fortieth annual report of the 'Societies for the Reformation of Manners' which appeared in 1735, it was stated that the number of prosecutions for debauchery and profaneness in London and Westminster alone, since the foundation of the societies, had been 99,380.

The societies about this time sank into comparative insignificance. The objections to them were of many kinds and came from many different quarters. Sacheverell, and some of the other High Churchmen, had denounced them as leading Churchmen to co-operate with Dissenters. Religious fervour had diminished throughout the nation, and what remained soon began to flow in the Methodist channel. To the mass of the people the character of informer and spy was intensely odious, and it was felt by many that swearing and abstaining from church were not fit grounds for judicial interference. The magistrates very wisely discouraged the prosecutions. Although the societies ordered their members to refuse to accept the sum which the law in certain cases awarded to the informer, great abuses sprang up. Corruption and private malice were detected in many of the prosecutions, much unpopularity was aroused, and about the middle of the eighteenth century the societies became extinct. They form, how-

ever, a curious episode in the history of their time, and in their earlier stages they were undoubtedly inspired by a fervid, though somewhat misguided, religious zeal.[1]

A few other instances may be given. In the colonies religious activity appears to have been greater than at home. About 1734 a religious revival, very similar to that of the Methodists, followed the preaching, and was afterwards described by the pen, of Jonathan Edwards; and a few years later the career of Brainerd furnished one of the purest and most touching pages in the history of missionary enterprise. At home the names of Wilson and Berkeley, of Gardiner and Watts, of Doddridge and Calamy, will at once occur to the reader. The writer, however, who exercised the deepest influence in this direction was probably the Nonjuror William Law. This very remarkable man was born in 1686. He had been Fellow of Emmanuel College at Cambridge, but having lost his Fellowship by his refusal to take the oath to George I., he became tutor to the father, and afterwards spiritual director to the aunt, of the historian Gibbon, and to another old lady, and he lived in great seclusion till his death in 1761. His opinions were of a High Church type much tinctured with asceticism, and latterly with mysticism, and he took an active part in most of the controversies of his time. He wrote a violent treatise on the absolute unlawfulness of the theatre. He attacked the opinions of Hoadly on Church government and on the Sacrament, the fable of the Bees by Mandeville, the Deism of Tindal, and the 'Divine

[1] The history of the societies may be gathered from Secretan's *Life of Nelson*; *An Account of the Societies for the Reformation of Manners in London and Westminster* (1699), and many pamphlets and anniversary sermons connected with them. A curious letter from Thomas Burnet to the Electress Sophia, describing Dr. Horneck, will be found in Kemble's *State Papers*, pp. 191–196.

Legation' of Warburton, and in his old age he enthusiastically embraced the mystical fancies of Jacob Behmen. He was a singularly skilful and brilliant controversialist, and in the opinion of many the most formidable of all the opponents of Hoadly; but his fame chiefly rests upon his purely devotional works—upon his treatise on 'Christian Perfection,' and above all, upon his 'Serious Call.' This book was for many years the standard devotional treatise which the more pious clergymen were accustomed to read to their parishioners, and the more pious masters to their households. To this book Dr. Johnson ascribed his first strong religious impressions. Gibbon has left an emphatic testimony to its merits, and Wesley not only recognised it as having had a powerful influence on his own mind, but even dates the whole religious revival of the eighteenth century from its appearance in 1730. It is indeed one of the most solemn and most powerful works of its kind in any literature, and is well fitted to exercise a deep and lasting influence upon the character. It is intended to demonstrate the necessity of a real Christian separating himself altogether in life and feelings from the world that is about him, to show how profoundly the modes of life and judgment, the aims, the ambitions, the amusements, the popular types of character in society are repugnant to the precepts and ideals of the Gospel; to prove that 'all worldly attainments, whether of greatness, wisdom, or bravery, are but empty sounds;' that 'there is nothing wise or great or noble in a human spirit but rightly to know and heartily to worship and adore the great God who is the support and life of all spirits whether in heaven or earth.'[1]

[1] Conclusion of the *Serious Call*. See, too, Tighe's *Life of Law*; Overton's *William Law*. There is an admirable analysis of the works of Law in Mr. Leslie Stephen's very valuable *Hist. of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*.

The Methodist movement was a purely religious one. All explanations which ascribe it to the ambition of its leaders, or to merely intellectual causes, are at variance with the facts of the case. The term Methodist was a college nickname bestowed upon a small society of students at Oxford, who met together between 1729 and 1735 for the purpose of mutual improvement. They were accustomed to communicate every week, to fast regularly on Wednesdays and Fridays, and on most days during Lent; to read and discuss the Bible in common, to abstain from most forms of amusement and luxury, and to visit sick persons, and prisoners in the gaol. John Wesley, the master spirit of this society,[1] and the future leader of the religious revival of the eighteenth century, was born in 1703, and was the second surviving son of Samuel Wesley, the Rector of Epworth, in Lincolnshire. His father, who had early abandoned Nonconformity, and acquired some reputation by many works both in prose and verse, had obtained his living from the Government of William, and had led for many years a useful and studious life, maintaining a far higher standard of clerical duty than was common in his time. His mother was the daughter of an eminent Nonconformist minister, who had been ejected in 1662, and was a woman of rare mental endowments, of intense piety, and of a strong, original, and somewhat stern character. Their home was not a happy one.

[1] Wesley's *Journals*, his *Thoughts on Methodism* and his *Hist. of the People called Methodist*, form together a full autobiography; and besides the well-known *Life of Wesley*, by Southey, there are several biographies written by members of his sect. By far the fullest is that of Mr. Tyerman, who, in a succession of works, has collected, with great industry, nearly all extant facts relating to the early history of Methodism. In the following pages I have availed myself largely of his researches. I must also mention Miss Wedgwood's remarkably able *Study on Wesley*, which throws great light on many sides of the religious history of the eighteenth century.

Discordant dispositions and many troubles darkened it. The family was very large. Many children died early. The father sank slowly into debt. His parishioners were fierce, profligate, and recalcitrant. When John Wesley was only six years old the rectory was burnt to the ground, and the child was forgotten among the flames, and only saved at the last moment by what he afterwards deemed an extraordinary Providence. All these circumstances doubtless deepened the natural and inherited piety for which he was so remarkable, and some strange and unexplained noises which during a long period were heard in the rectory, and which its inmates concluded to be supernatural, contributed to that vein of credulity which ran through his character.

He was sent to the Charterhouse, and from thence to Oxford, where at the age of twenty-three he was elected Fellow of Lincoln. He had some years before acquired from his brother a certain knowledge of Hebrew, and he was speedily distinguished by his extraordinary logical powers, by the untiring industry with which he threw himself into the studies of the place, and above all by the force and energy of his character. His religious impressions, which had been for a time somewhat obscured, revived in their full intensity while he was preparing for ordination in 1725. He was troubled with difficulties, which his father and mother gradually removed, about the damnatory clauses in the Athanasian Creed, and about the compatibility of the Articles with his decidedly Arminian views concerning election; and he was deeply influenced by the 'Imitation' of Thomas à Kempis, by the 'Holy Living and Dying' of Jeremy Taylor, and by Law's 'Serious Call.' His life at Oxford became very strict. He rose every morning at four, a practice which he continued till extreme old age. He made pilgrimages on foot to William Law to ask for spiritual advice. He abstained from the usual

fashion of having his hair dressed, in order that he might give the money so saved to the poor. He refused to return the visits of those who called on him, that he might avoid all idle conversation. His fasts were so severe that they seriously impaired his health, and extreme abstinence and gloomy views about religion are said to have contributed largely to hurry one of the closest of his college companions to an early and a clouded death.

The society hardly numbered more than fifteen members, and was the object of much ridicule at the university; but it included some men who afterwards played considerable parts in the world. Among them was Charles, the younger brother of John Wesley, whose hymns became the favourite poetry of the sect, and whose gentler, more submissive, and more amiable character, though less fitted than that of his brother for the great conflicts of public life, was very useful in moderating the movement, and in drawing converts to it by personal influence. Charles Wesley appears to have originated the society at Oxford; he brought Whitefield into its pale, and besides being the most popular poet he was one of the most persuasive preachers of the movement. There, too, was James Hervey, who became one of the earliest links connecting Methodism with general literature. During most of his short life he was a confirmed invalid. His affected language, his feeble, tremulous, and lymphatic nature formed a curious contrast to the robust energy of Wesley and Whitefield; but he was a great master of a kind of tumid and overornamented rhetoric which has an extraordinary attraction to half-educated minds. His 'Meditations' was one of the most popular books of the eighteenth century.[1] His 'Theron and Aspasio,' which was hardly

[1] 'No less than seventeen authorised editions (besides various piratical ones) of Hervey's *Meditations* were published in about

less successful, was an elaborate defence of Evangelical opinions; and though at this time the pupil and one of the warmest admirers of Wesley, he afterwards became conspicuous in the Calvinistic section of the party, and wrote with much acerbity against his old master. There, too, above all, was George Whitefield, in after years the greatest pulpit orator of England. He was born in 1714, in Gloucester, in the Bell Inn, of which his mother was proprietor, and where upon the decline of her fortunes he was for some time employed in servile functions. He had been a wild impulsive boy, alternately remarkable for many mischievous pranks, and for strange outbursts of religious zeal. He stole money from his mother, and he gave part of it to the poor. He early declared his intention one day to preach the Gospel, but he was the terror of the Dissenting minister of his neighbourhood, whose religious services he was accustomed to ridicule and interrupt. He bought devotional books, read the Bible assiduously, and on one occasion, when exasperated by some teasing, he relieved his feelings, as he tells us, by pouring out in his solitude the menaces of the 118th Psalm; but he was also passionately fond of card-playing, novel-reading, and the theatre; he was two or three times intoxicated, and he confesses with much penitence to 'a sensual passion' for fruits and cakes. His strongest natural bias was towards the stage. He indulged it on every possible occasion, and at school he wrote plays and acted in a

seventeen years. Of his *Theron and Aspasio* (though it was in three volumes), nearly 10,000 copies were sold in England in nine months.'—Tyerman's *Oxford Methodists*, pp. 256, 304. See, too, Wedgwood's *Wesley*, p. 69. The popularity of Hervey was not confined to England. Coleridge says that for some years before the appearance of the 'Robbers' of Schiller, 'three of the most popular books in the German language were the translations of Young's *Night Thoughts*, Hervey's *Meditations*, and Richardson's *Clarissa Harlowe*.'—Critique on Bertram, in the *Biographia Literaria*.

female part. Owing to the great poverty of his mother he could only go to Oxford as a servitor, and his career there was a very painful one. Thomas à Kempis, Drelincourt's 'Defence against Death,' and Law's devotional works had all their part in kindling his piety into a flame. He was haunted with gloomy and superstitious fancies, and his religion assumed the darkest and most ascetic character. He always chose the worst food, fasted twice a week, wore woollen gloves, a patched gown, and dirty shoes, and was subject to paroxysms of a morbid devotion. He remained for hours prostrate on the ground in Christ's Church Walk in the midst of the night, and continued his devotions till his hands grew black with cold. One Lent he carried his fasting to such a point that when Passion week arrived he had hardly sufficient strength to creep upstairs, and his memory was seriously impaired. In 1733 he came in contact with Charles Wesley, who brought him into the society. To a work called 'The Life of God in the Soul of Man,' which Charles Wesley put into his hands, he ascribed his first conviction of that doctrine of free salvation which he afterwards made it the great object of his life to teach.[1]

With the exception of a short period in which he was assisting his father at Epworth, John Wesley continued at Oxford till the death of his father in 1735, when the society was dispersed, and the two Wesleys soon after accepted the invitation of General Oglethorpe, to accompany him to the new colony of Georgia. It was on his voyage to that colony that the founder of Methodism first came in contact with the Moravians, who so deeply influenced his future life. He was surprised and somewhat humiliated at finding that they treated him as a mere novice in religion; their perfect

[1] Philip's *Life of Whitefield.*

composure during a dangerous storm made a profound impression on his mind, and he employed himself while on board ship in learning German, in order that he might converse with them. On his arrival in the colony, he abandoned after a very slight attempt his first project of converting the Indians, and devoted himself wholly to the colonists at Savannah. They were of many different nationalities, and it is a remarkable proof of the energy and accomplishments of Wesley, that in addition to his English services he officiated regularly in German, French, and Italian, and was at the same time engaged in learning Spanish, in order to converse with some Jewish parishioners.

His character and opinions at this time may be briefly described. He was a man who had made religion the single aim and object of his life; who was prepared to encounter for it every form of danger, discomfort, and obloquy; who devoted exclusively to it an energy of will and a power of intellect that in worldly professions might have raised him to the highest positions of honour and wealth. Of his sincerity, of his self-renunciation, of his deep and fervent piety, of his almost boundless activity, there can be no question. Yet with all these qualities he was not an amiable man. He was hard, punctilious, domineering, and in a certain sense even selfish. A short time before he left England, his father, who was then an old and dying man, and who dreaded above all things that the religious fervour which he had spent the greater part of his life in kindling in his parish should dwindle after his death, entreated his son in the most pathetic terms to remove to Epworth, in which case he would probably succeed to the living, and be able to maintain his mother in her old home. Wesley peremptorily refused to leave Oxford, and the reason he assigned was very characteristic. 'The question,' he said, 'is not whether I could do more good to others there than

here; but whether I could do more good to myself, seeing wherever I can be most holy myself, there I can most promote holiness in others.' 'My chief motive,' he wrote, when starting for Georgia, 'is the hope of saving my own soul. I hope to learn the true sense of the Gospel of Christ by preaching it to the heathen.'[1]

He was at this time a High Churchman of a very narrow type, full of exaggerated notions about Church discipline, extremely anxious to revive obsolete rubrics, and determined to force the strictest ritualistic observances upon rude colonists, for whom of all men they were least adapted. He insisted upon adopting baptism by immersion, and refused to baptise a child whose parents objected to that form. He would not permit any non-communicant to be a sponsor; repelled one of the holiest men in the colony from the communion-table because he was a Dissenter; refused for the same reason to read the burial service over another; made it a special object of his teaching to prevent ladies of his congregation from wearing any gold ornament or any rich dress, and succeeded in inducing Oglethorpe to issue an order forbidding any colonist from throwing a line or firing a gun on Sunday. His sermons, it was complained, were all satires on particular persons. He insisted upon weekly communions, desired to re-baptise Dissenters who abandoned their nonconformity, and exercised his pastoral duties in such a manner that he was accused of meddling in every quarrel, and prying into every family. As might have been expected, he soon became extremely unpopular in the colony, and a disgraceful episode terminated his stay. A connection, which was at first purely religious, between himself and a young lady of his congregation, gradually led to feelings of a different order. Considerable approaches—

[1] Tyerman's *Wesley*, i. 96, 115.

according to the lady's account they amounted to a distinct proposal—were made towards a marriage, but before finally deciding, he thought it necessary to consult the authorities of the Moravian Church, who ordered him to proceed no farther in the matter, and whose judgment he accepted as the command of God. The lady soon after married a Mr. Wilkinson—a 'person,' Wesley very bitterly complained, 'not remarkable for handsomeness, neither for greatness, neither for wit, or knowledge, or sense, and least of all for religion.' Wesley continued, in spite of her husband's express command, his pastoral attentions to her, forced himself repeatedly into her presence, and ended by repelling her from the communion. It was said among his followers that the lady had made the first overtures to Wesley and had feigned a greater devotion than was real to her in order to attract him; but the only specific charge alleged against her was that she had not communicated more than three times in three months, and had not intimated her intention to the clergyman before coming to the sacred table. Her husband was naturally and greatly incensed at the stigma thus publicly inflicted on his wife, and he brought an action against Wesley for defaming her character.

It is not surprising that the worst construction should have been put upon the motives of a clergyman who acted in such a manner. The grand jury were divided in their opinions, but the majority pronounced his conduct wholly unjustifiable, and took the opportunity of censuring the ritualistic innovations and severities which he had introduced. A trial was impending, but owing to different causes, and in spite of the ardent desire of Wesley, it was repeatedly and almost indefinitely postponed. In the meantime, popular feeling ran violently against him. His position had become intolerable, and his usefulness was almost destroyed.

Under these circumstances, Wesley, by the advice of his friends, fled from Georgia, and arrived in England on February 1, 1737–8.[1] At that very moment Whitefield was on his way to the colony.

A more unpropitious commencement for a great career could hardly be conceived. Wesley returned to England in bad health and low spirits. He redoubled his austerities and his zeal in teaching, and he was tortured by doubts about the reality of his faith. It was at this time, and in this state of mind, that he came in contact with Peter Böhler, a Moravian teacher, whose calm and concentrated enthusiasm, united with unusual mental powers, gained a complete ascendency over his mind. From him Wesley for the first time learned that form of the doctrine of justification by faith which he afterwards regarded as the fundamental tenet of Christianity. He had long held that in order to be a real Christian it was necessary to live a life wholly differing from that of the world around him, and that such a renewal of life could only be effected by the operation of the Divine Spirit; and he does not appear to have had serious difficulties about the doctrine of imputed righteousness, although the ordinary Evangelical doctrine on this matter was emphatically repudiated and denounced by Law.[2] From Böhler he first learned to believe that every man, no matter how moral, how pious, or how orthodox he may be, is in a state of damnation, until, by a supernatural and instantaneous process wholly unlike that of human reasoning, the conviction flashes upon his mind that the sacrifice of Christ has been applied to and has expiated his sins;

[1] Tyerman, i. 146–156, 160–169. It appears probable from some curious letters printed by Tyerman (i. 76–79) that Wesley had some years before been under the spell of that very fascinating woman Mrs. Pendarves, afterwards Mrs. Delany.

[2] See his *Letters on the most important Subjects*, especially Letters 4 and 5, and also his work on *The Atonement*.

that this supernatural and personal conviction or illumination is what is meant by saving faith, and that it is inseparably accompanied by an absolute assurance of salvation, and by a complete dominion over sin. It cannot exist where there is not a sense of the pardon of all past and of freedom from all present sins. It is impossible that he who has experienced it should be in serious and lasting doubt as to the fact, for its fruits are 'constant peace—not one uneasy thought,' 'freedom from sin—not one unholy desire.' Repentance and fruits meet for repentance, such as the forgiveness of those who have offended us, ceasing from evil and doing good, may precede this faith, but good works in the theological sense of the term spring from, and therefore can only follow, faith.

Such, as clearly as I can state it, was the fundamental doctrine which Wesley adopted from the Moravians. His mind was now thrown, through causes very susceptible of a natural explanation, into an exceedingly excited and abnormal condition, and he has himself chronicled with great minuteness in his journal the incidents that follow. On Sunday, March 5, 1738, he tells us that Böhler first fully convinced him of the want of that supernatural faith which alone could save. The shock was very great, and the first impulse of Wesley was to abstain from preaching, but his new master dissuaded him, saying: 'Preach faith till you have it, and then because you have faith you will preach faith.' He followed the advice, and several weeks passed in a state of extreme religious excitement, broken, however, by strange fits of 'indifference, dulness, and coldness.' While still believing himself to be in a state of damnation, he preached the new doctrine with such passionate fervour, that he was excluded from pulpit after pulpit. He preached to the criminals in the gaols. He visited under the superintendence of

Böhler some persons who professed to have undergone the instantaneous and supernatural illumination. He addressed the passengers whom he met on the roads, or at the public tables in the inns. On one occasion, at Birmingham, he abstained from doing so, and he relates, with his usual imperturbable confidence, that a heavy hailstorm which he afterwards encountered, was a Divine judgment, sent to punish him for his neglect.

This condition could not last long. At length, on May 24—a day which he ever after looked back upon as the most momentous in his life—the cloud was dispelled. Early in the morning, according to his usual custom, he opened the Bible at random, seeking for a Divine guidance, and his eye lighted on the words, 'There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, even that ye should be partakers of the Divine nature.' Before he left the house he again consulted the oracle, and the first words he read were, 'Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God.' In the afternoon he attended service in St. Paul's Cathedral, and the anthem, to his highly wrought imagination, seemed a repetition of the same hope. The sequel may be told in his own words. 'In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed, I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away *my* sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death. I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more especial manner despitefully used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all, what I now first felt in my heart.'[1]

[1] *Journal*, 1738.

Pictures of this kind are not uncommon in the lives of religious enthusiasts, but they usually have a very limited interest and importance. It is, however, scarcely an exaggeration to say that the scene which took place at that humble meeting in Aldersgate Street forms an epoch in English history. The conviction which then flashed upon one of the most powerful and most active intellects in England is the true source of English Methodism. Shortly before this, Charles Wesley, who had also fallen completely under the influence of Böhler, had passed through a similar change; and Whitefield, without ever adopting the dangerous doctrine of perfection which was so prominent in the Methodist teaching, was at a still earlier period an ardent preacher of justification by faith and of the new birth. It was characteristic of John Wesley that ten days before his conversion he wrote a long, petulant and dictatorial letter to his old master, William Law, reproaching him with having kept back from him the fundamental doctrine of Christianity, and intimating in strong and discourteous language his own conviction, and that of Böhler, that the spiritual condition of Law was a very dangerous one. It was no less characteristic of the indefatigable energy which formed another and a better side of his nature, that immediately after his change he started on a pilgrimage to Herrnhut, the head-quarters of Moravianism, in order that he might study to the best advantage what he now regarded as the purest type of a Christian Church. He returned objecting to many things, but more than ever convinced of his new doctrine, and more than ever resolved to spend his life in diffusing it. In the course of 1738 the chief elements of the movement were already formed. Whitefield had returned from Georgia, Charles Wesley had begun to preach the doctrine with extraordinary effect to the criminals in Newgate and from every pul-

pit into which he was admitted. Methodist societies had already sprung up under Moravian influence. They were in part a continuation of the society at Oxford, in part a revival of those religious societies that have been already noticed as so common after the Revolution. The design of each was to be a church within a church, a seedplot of a more fervent piety, the centre of a stricter discipline and a more energetic propagandism than existed in religious communities at large. In these societies the old Christian custom of lovefeasts was revived. The members sometimes passed almost the whole night in the most passionate devotions, and voluntarily submitted to a spiritual tyranny that could hardly be surpassed in a Catholic monastery. They were to meet every week, to make an open and particular confession of every frailty, to submit to be cross-examined on all their thoughts, words and deeds. The following among others were the questions asked at every meeting: 'What known sin have you committed since our last meeting? What temptations have you met with? How were you delivered? What have you thought, said, or done of which you doubt whether it be sin or not? Have you nothing you desire to keep secret?'

Such rules could only have been accepted under the influence of an overpowering religious enthusiasm, and there was much truth in the judgment which the elder brother of John Wesley passed upon them in 1739. 'Their societies,' he wrote to their mother, 'are sufficient to dissolve all other societies but their own. Will any man of common sense or spirit suffer any domestic to be in a band engaged to relate to five or ten people everything without reserve that concerns the person's conscience how much soever it may concern the family? Ought any married persons to be there unless husband and wife be there together?'

From this time the leaders of the movement became the most active of missionaries. Without any fixed parishes they wandered from place to place, proclaiming their new doctrine in every pulpit to which they were admitted, and they speedily awoke a passionate enthusiasm and a bitter hostility in the Church. Nothing, indeed, could appear more irregular to the ordinary parochial clergyman than those itinerant ministers who broke away violently from the settled habits of their profession, who belonged to and worshipped in small religious societies that bore a suspicious resemblance to conventicles, and whose whole tone and manner of preaching were utterly unlike anything to which he was accustomed. They taught, in language of the most vehement emphasis, as the cardinal tenet of Christianity, the doctrine of a new birth in a form which was altogether novel to their hearers. They were never weary of urging that all men are in a condition of damnation who have not experienced a sudden, violent, and supernatural change, or of inveighing against the clergy for their ignorance of the very essence of Christianity. 'Tillotson,' in the words of Whitefield, 'knew no more about true Christianity than Mahomet.' 'The Whole Duty of Man,' which was the most approved devotional manual of the time, was pronounced by the same preacher, on account of the stress it laid upon good works, to have 'sent thousands to hell.' The Methodist preacher came to an Anglican parish in the spirit, and with the language, of a missionary going to the most ignorant heathens; and he asked the clergyman of the parish to lend him his pulpit, in order that he might instruct the parishioners—perhaps for the first time—in the true Gospel of Christ. It is not surprising that the clergy should have resented such a movement, and the manner of the missionary was as startling as his matter. The sermons of the time were, as I have said,

almost always written, and the prevailing taste was cold, polished, and fastidious. The new preachers preached extempore, with the most intense fervour of language and gesture, and usually with a complete disregard of the conventionalities of their profession. Wesley frequently mounted the pulpit without even knowing from what text he would preach, believing that when he opened his Bible at random the Divine Spirit would guide him infallibly in his choice. The oratory of Whitefield was so impassioned that the preacher was sometimes scarcely able to proceed for his tears, while half the audience were convulsed with sobs. The love of order, routine, and decorum, which was the strongest feeling in the clerical mind, was violently shocked. The regular congregation was displaced by an agitated throng, who had never before been seen within the precincts of the church. The usual quiet worship was disturbed by violent enthusiasm or violent opposition, by hysterical paroxysms of devotion or remorse, and when the preacher had left the parish he seldom failed to leave behind him the elements of agitation and division.

We may blame, but we can hardly, I think, wonder at the hostility all this aroused among the clergy. It is, indeed, certain that Wesley and Whitefield were at this time doing more than any other contemporary clergymen to kindle a living piety among the people. It is equally certain that they held the doctrines of the Articles and the Homilies with an earnestness very rare among their brother clergymen, that none of their peculiar doctrines were in conflict with those doctrines, and that Wesley at least was attached with an even superstitious reverence to ecclesiastical forms. Yet before the end of 1738 the Methodist leaders were excluded from most of the pulpits of the Church, and were thus compelled, unless they consented to relinquish what

they considered a Divine mission, to take steps in the direction of separation.

Two important measures of this nature were taken in 1739. One of them was the creation of Methodist chapels, which were intended not to oppose or replace, but to be supplemental and ancillary to, the churches, and to secure that the doctrine of the new birth should be faithfully taught to the people. The other, and still more important event, was the institution by Whitefield of field-preaching. The idea had occurred to him in London, where he found congregations too numerous for the church in which he preached, but the first actual step was taken in the neighbourhood of Bristol. At a time when he was himself excluded from the pulpits at Bristol, and was thus deprived of the chief normal means of exercising his talents, his attention was called to the condition of the colliers of Kingswood. He was filled with horror and compassion at finding in the heart of a Christian country, and in the immediate neighbourhood of a great city, a population of many thousands, sunk in the most brutal ignorance and vice, and entirely excluded from the ordinances of religion. Moved by such feelings, he resolved to address the colliers in their own haunts. The resolution was a bold one, for field-preaching was then utterly unknown in England, and it needed no common courage to brave all the obloquy and derision it must provoke, and to commence the experiment in the centre of a half-savage population. Whitefield, however, had a just confidence in his cause and in his powers. Standing himself upon a hillside, he took for his text the first words of the sermon which was spoken from the Mount, and he addressed with his accustomed fire an astonished audience of some 200 men. The fame of his eloquence spread far and wide. On successive occasions, five, ten, fifteen, even twenty thousand were present. It was February, but the

winter sun shone clear and bright. The lanes were filled with carriages of the more wealthy citizens, whom curiosity had drawn from Bristol. The trees and hedges were crowded with humbler listeners, and the fields were darkened by a compact mass. The voice of the great preacher pealed with a thrilling power to the very outskirts of that mighty throng. The picturesque novelty of the occasion and of the scene, the contagious emotion of so great a multitude, a deep sense of the condition of his hearers and of the momentous importance of the step he was taking, gave an additional solemnity to his eloquence. His rude auditors were electrified. They stood for a time in rapt and motionless attention. Soon tears might be seen forming white gutters down cheeks blackened from the coal-mine. Then sobs and groans told how hard hearts were melting at his words. A fire was kindled among the outcasts of Kingswood which burnt long and fiercely, and was destined in a few years to overspread the land.

It was only with great difficulty that Whitefield could persuade the Wesleys to join him in this new phase of missionary labour. John Wesley has left on record in his Journal his first repugnance to it, 'having,' as he says, 'been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church.' Charles Wesley, on this as on most other occasions, was even more strongly conservative. The two brothers adopted their usual superstitious practice of opening their Bibles at random, under the belief that the texts on which their eyes first fell would guide them in their decision. The texts were ambiguous and somewhat ominous, relating for the most part to violent deaths; but on drawing lots the lot determined them to go. It was on this slender ground that they resolved to give the weight of their example

to this most important development of the movement. They went to Bristol, from which Whitefield was speedily called, and continued the work among the Kingswood colliers, and among the people of the city; while Whitefield, after a preaching tour of some weeks in the country, reproduced on a still larger scale the triumphs of Kingswood by preaching with marvellous effect to immense throngs of the London rabble at Moorfields and on Kennington Common. From this time field-preaching became one of the most conspicuous features of the revival.

The character and genius of the great preacher to whom this most important development of Methodism was due demand a more extended notice than I have yet given them. Unlike Wesley, whose strongest enthusiasm was always curbed by a powerful will, and who manifested at all times and on all subjects an even exaggerated passion for reasoning, Whitefield was chiefly a creature of impulse and emotion. He had very little logical skill, no depth or range of knowledge, not much self-restraint, nothing of the commanding and organising talent, and it must be added, nothing of the arrogant and imperious spirit so conspicuous in his colleague. At the same time a more zealous, a more single-minded, a more truly amiable, a more purely unselfish man it would be difficult to conceive. He lived perpetually in the sight of eternity, and a desire to save souls was the single passion of his life. Of his labours it is sufficient to say that it has been estimated that in the thirty-four years of his active career he preached 18,000 times, or on an average ten times a week, that these sermons were delivered with the utmost vehemence of voice and gesture, often in the open air, and to congregations of many thousands, and that he continued his exertions to the last, when his constitution was hopelessly shattered by disease. During long

periods he preached forty hours, and sometimes as much as sixty hours, a week. In the prosecution of his missionary labours he visited almost every important district in England and Wales. At least twelve times he traversed Scotland, three times he preached in Ireland, thirteen times he crossed the Atlantic. Very few men placed by circumstances at the head of a great religious movement have been so absolutely free from the spirit of sect. Very few men have passed through so much obloquy with a heart so entirely unsoured, and have retained amidst so much adulation so large a measure of deep and genuine humility. There was indeed not a trace of jealousy, ambition, or rancour in his nature. There is something singularly touching in the zeal with which he endeavoured to compose the differences between himself and Wesley, when so many of the followers of each leader were endeavouring to envenom them; in the profound respect he continually expressed for his colleague at the time of their separation; in the exuberant gratitude he always showed for the smallest act of kindness to himself; in the tenderness with which he guarded the interests of the inmates of that orphanage at Georgia around which his strongest earthly affections were entwined; in the almost childish simplicity with which he was always ready to make a public confession of his faults.

His failings were chiefly those of a somewhat weak nature, of overstrung nerves, and of a half-educated and very defective taste. He was a little irritable and occasionally a little vain. His theological opinions betrayed him into much narrowness of judgment, and his impulsive disposition into constant indiscretion and exaggeration of language. His letters, and indeed most of his writings, are intolerably tedious, and sometimes not a little repulsive. They are written for the most part with that exaggeration of sentiment, in that

maudlin, ecstatic, effusive, and meretricious style which is so common among his co-religionists, and which appears to most cultivated minds to denote much vulgarity, not only of taste, but of feeling. It is a style crowded with ejaculations, interrogations, and quotations from Scripture, in which the simplest subject is expressed in strained Biblical language, in which the inmost and deepest feelings of the soul are ostentatiously paraded, and the most sacred subjects and the holiest names are treated with coarse familiarity. His devotional language is of the kind which Wesley designated as 'luscious or amorous,' and it is marked by an utter absence of reticence, dignity, or measure. Of the even profane imagery to which he could descend it is sufficient to say that he once spoke of Christ as 'roasted, as it were, in the Father's wrath, and therefore fitly styled the Lamb of God.' He was too fond of assuming the language of a martyr, and of publishing to the world accounts of the fluctuations of his feelings. Sometimes he writes in a strain of high spiritual pride, 'I have a garden near at hand, where I go particularly to meet and talk with my God at the cool of every day.' 'I am filled, as it were, with the fullness of God. I am frequently at Calvary and frequently on Mount Tabor.' 'My heaven is begun indeed. I feast on the fatted calf.' At other times he describes himself as 'a worm,' 'a dead dog,' 'an outcast of the people.' All this exaggeration of language, as well as his extraordinary propensity to tears, provoked much ridicule and led many very naturally, though very unjustly, to question his sincerity. In the latter part of his career he became chaplain to the Countess of Huntingdon and had frequent relations with members of the nobility, and although there is no evidence that this connection ever led him to relax his efforts for the benefit of the poor, or to conceal or neglect any known frailty of his hearers, it produced a vast amount of ful-

some, florid, half-Scriptural adulation about 'the elect lady,' and the other 'great ones of the world' with whom he had come in contact. In this respect Whitefield differed remarkably from Wesley, who was absolutely inaccessible to the fascinations of rank.

His position with reference to the Church was a very singular one. He was an ordained clergyman cordially acknowledging all the Articles and sincerely attached to the liturgy of his Church, but at the same time altogether independent of ecclesiastical control. To Wesley's mind, the ecclesiastical aspect of things appeared always extremely important, and he was for much of his life greatly troubled about questions concerning the form of baptism, the propriety of rebaptising Dissenters, the functions and privileges of different orders of clergy, and the nature and danger of schism. At no period of his development do such questions appear to have had any interest for Whitefield. His one object was to save souls by propagating what he regarded as the cardinal truths of the Gospel, and he looked upon the framework of churches as altogether unimportant, except as far as they gave him facilities for this work. Travelling from place to place, he pursued his course without the slightest control, and he had not the smallest scruple in preaching in Dissenting meeting-houses, in receiving the communion with Dissenters, or, when in Scotland, baptising children according to the Scotch form. When an English bishop dilated upon the great and manifest irregularity of his proceedings, he answered with much force that he had never diverged on a single point from the doctrines of his Church, but had nevertheless been excluded from the great majority of its pulpits. 'When I acted in the most regular manner, and when I was bringing multitudes, even of Dissenters themselves, to crowd the churches, without any other reason being given than that of too many followers after me, I was

denied the use of them. Being thus excluded, and many thousands of ignorant souls, that perhaps would neither go to church nor meeting-houses, being very hungry after the Gospel, I thought myself bound in duty to deal out to them the bread of life.' Canons were cited which he had infringed, but he answered that much that was in the Canons had been tacitly suffered to fall into desuetude, and that it would be hard if those parts should be especially enforced which limited a clergyman in his power of usefulness. 'As good is done and souls are benefited, I hope your lordship will not regard a little irregularity, since at the worst it is only the irregularity of doing well.'[1] In the same spirit, when in 1741 the Associate Presbytery, who had seceded from the Church of Scotland, invited him to preach, he utterly refused to enter into their petty quarrels, professed his complete readiness to communicate with them, but his firm resolution not to abandon the Church of England, and maintained in the face of Presbyterian as strongly as in the face of Episcopalian bigotry, that no particular form of Church government was of Divine obligation. When urged to preach only in the meeting-houses of the Associate Presbytery, he answered: 'I come only as an occasional preacher to preach the simple Gospel to all that are willing to hear me of whatever denomination. . . . If I am quite neuter as to Church government in my preaching, I cannot see how it can hinder or retard any design you may have on foot.' 'If the Pope himself would lend me his pulpit, I would gladly proclaim the righteousness of Jesus Christ therein.'[2]

The position which Whitefield took on this subject is well worthy of attention, for it is typical of the whole course of the Methodist movement. As time rolled on, there were many clergymen who followed his example,

[1] Gledstone's *Whitefield*, pp. 458, 460. [2] Ibid. 253–262.

and became at least virtually Dissenters, without having the smallest disposition to reject the doctrine or discard the liturgy of the Church. Their only objection to it was the severity of its discipline, which limited their powers for good. Had the Church of England, like the Church of Rome, possessed a sufficient variety or elasticity of organisation to find a place for her more enthusiastic disciples, it may be safely asserted that the Methodist movement would never have resulted in a schism.

The position of a roving evangelist was of all others that for which both the genius and the disposition of Whitefield were most suited. Great as was the success of John Wesley in the career which he adopted, it is difficult to observe his extraordinary powers both of organisation and of reasoning, without reflecting upon what he might have been if circumstances had made him a statesman or a lawyer, while his brother was clearly more fitted for the quiet life of a country clergyman. Whitefield, beyond all other men, was adapted for the boisterous vicissitudes of the itinerant life. To move the great masses of the populace by impassioned religious appeals, to travel from place to place, perpetually addressing new congregations and kindling to a flame the smouldering piety of the nation, was at once his peculiar talent and his supreme delight.

As a popular preacher, indeed, he appears never to have been equalled in England, and the information we possess concerning him is sufficient to enable us to realise very fully the elements of his success. His eloquence had nothing of that chaste and polished beauty which was displayed in the discourses of the great French preachers, and which in the present century has led so many men of fastidious taste to hang spell-bound around the pulpit of Robert Hall. It had none of that force of reasoning, that originality of thought, or that splendour

of language, which constituted the great charm of the sermons of Chalmers. Yet, while exercising a power, which has probably never been equalled, on the most ignorant and the most vicious, Whitefield was quite capable of fascinating the most refined audiences in London, and he extorted the tribute of warm admiration from such critics as Hume and Franklin, from such orators as Bolingbroke and Chesterfield. His preaching combined almost the highest perfection of acting with the most burning fervour of conviction. No man ever exhibited more wonderfully that strange power which great histrionic talent exercises over the human mind—investing words which are in truth the emptiest bombast with all the glow of the most majestic eloquence, and imparting, for a moment at least, to confident assertions more than the weight of the most convincing arguments. His gestures were faultless in their beauty and propriety, while his voice was so powerful that Franklin, who was the most accurate of men, ascertained by experiment that it could be heard distinctly in the open air by 30,000 persons.[1] It was at the same time eminently sweet, musical, and varied, and it was managed with a perfect skill. Garrick is reported to have said, with a pardonable exaggeration, that Whitefield could pronounce the word Mesopotamia in such a way as to move an audience to tears. With the exception of a slight squint of one eye, which was much dwelt on by his satirists, his person was unusually graceful and imposing, and, like Chatham, the piercing glance of a singularly brilliant eye contributed in no small measure to the force of his appeals.

To these gifts we must add a large command of vivid, homely, and picturesque English, and an extraordinary measure of the tact which enables a practised

[1] Franklin's *Autobiography*, ch. viii.

orator to adapt himself to the character and dispositions of his audience. We must add, above all, a contagious fervour of enthusiasm, which, like a resistless torrent, bore down every obstacle. Of no other preacher could it be more truly said that he preached 'as a dying man to dying men.' His favourite maxim was that 'a preacher, whenever he entered the pulpit, should look upon it as the last time he might preach, and the last time his people might hear.' To his vivid imagination Heaven and Hell, Death and Judgment appeared palpably present. His voice was sometimes choked with tears; he stamped vehemently on the pulpit floor; every nerve was strained; his whole frame was convulsed with passion.[1] One who heard him, described how, during the whole remainder of his life, he was haunted by the recollection of the tone of piercing pathos with which Whitefield once interrupted the course of his remarks, as if overpowered by a sudden thought: 'Oh, my hearers, the wrath to come! the wrath to come!' One of the great peculiarities of the Methodist preachers was the personal application they gave to their exhortations. It was their main object, by gesture, by look, by the constant use of the singular pronoun, to preach so that each member of the congregation might imagine the whole force of the denunciations or of the pleadings of the preacher was directed individually to himself. In this art Whitefield especially excelled, and he sometimes carried it to strange lengths, and employed it with strange effects. On one occasion he saw the actor Shuter, who was then attracting much notice in the part of Ramble in the 'Rambler,' seated

[1] Winter, in his very interesting description of Whitefield's preaching, said: 'Sometimes he wept exceedingly, stamped loudly and passionately, and was frequently so overcome that for a few seconds you would suspect he could not recover.'—Winter's Letter to Jay. Gillies' *Life of Whitefield*, pp. 298–308.

in a front pew of the gallery. He at once turned towards him and exclaimed, 'And thou, too, poor Ramble, who hast rambled so far from him, oh! cease thy ramblings, and come to Jesus.' On another, when appealing to a negro congregation he asked whether they did not desire to go to heaven, the audience was amused by an old negro audibly exclaiming 'Yes, sir.' 'The gentleman put the question once or twice,' he afterwards explained, 'till at last he seemed to point to me, and I was ashamed that nobody should answer him, and therefore I did.' Very frequently by his glance he singled out, or appeared to single out, one member of his vast congregation, and a great part of the tremendous power which his appeals exercised over some minds is ascribed to this habit.

He delighted in strokes of dramatic oratory, which with an ordinary man would have appeared simply ludicrous or intolerably tawdry, but to which his transcendent power of acting never failed to impart an extraordinary power. On one occasion—the scene is described by no less a person than David Hume—'after a solemn pause he thus addressed the audience: "The attendant angel is just about to leave the threshold of this sanctuary and ascend to heaven. And shall he ascend and not bear with him the news of one sinner among all this multitude reclaimed from the error of his way?" To give the greater effect to this exclamation Whitefield stamped with his foot, lifted up his hands and eyes to heaven, and cried aloud, "Stop, Gabriel, stop ere you enter the sacred portals, and yet carry with you the news of one sinner converted to God!" This address,' adds Hume, 'was accompanied by such animated, yet natural action, that it surpassed anything I ever saw or heard in any other preacher.'[1] He was fond of painting the denial by Peter, and when he came

[1] Gledstone's *Life of Whitefield*, pp. 378, 379.

to describe the Apostle as going out and weeping bitterly, he had always ready a fold of his gown in which to bury his face. Sometimes he would visit a Court of Justice, and afterwards reproduce the condemnation scene in the pulpit. With his eyes full of tears, and his voice trembling with pity, he would begin, after a momentary pause: 'I am now going to put on the condemning cap. Sinner, I must do it. I must pronounce sentence upon you.' Then, changing his tone, he thundered over his awestruck congregation the solemn words —'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!' Of the vehemence of his manner, and the extraordinary effect which that vehemence produced, it is difficult from any example of our own day to form a conception. 'I hardly ever knew him to go through a sermon,' wrote one who knew him well, 'without weeping more or less, and I truly believe his were the tears of sincerity. His voice was often interrupted by his affection, and I have heard him say in the pulpit, "You blame me for weeping, but how can I help it when you will not weep for yourselves, though your immortal souls are on the verge of destruction, and for aught you know, you are hearing your last sermon?"'[1] 'God always makes use of strong passions,' he was accustomed to say, 'for a great work,' and it was the object of his eloquence to rouse such passions to the highest point. Hume describes almost the whole assembly as weeping, and though himself one of the most delicate of critics and one of the coldest and most sceptical of men, he pronounced Whitefield the most ingenious preacher he had ever heard, and declared that it was worth going twenty miles to hear him.

The account which Franklin has given of the effects of the eloquence of Whitefield, though well known, is too characteristic to be omitted. Franklin, strongly dis-

[1] Letter of the Rev. Cornelius Winter. Gillies' *Whitefield*, p. 302.

approving of the scheme of building an orphanage in Georgia, which was but thinly populated and where workmen and materials were scarce, instead of at Philadelphia, determined not to support it. 'I happened soon after,' he tells us, 'to attend one of his sermons, in the course of which I perceived he intended to finish with a collection, and I silently resolved he should get nothing from me. I had in my pocket a handful of copper money, three or four silver dollars, and five pistoles in gold. As he proceeded I began to soften, and concluded to give the copper. Another stroke of his oratory made me ashamed of that and determined me to give the silver; and he finished so admirably that I emptied my pocket wholly into the collector's dish, gold and all. At this sermon there was also one of our club, who being of my sentiments respecting the building in Georgia, and suspecting a collection might be intended, had by precaution emptied his pockets before he came from home. Towards the conclusion of the discourse, however, he felt a strong inclination to give, and applied to a neighbour who stood near him to lend him some money for the purpose. The request was made to perhaps the only man in the company who had the firmness not to be affected by the preacher. His answer was, "At any other time, friend Hopkinson, I would lend thee freely, but not now, for thee seems to me to be out of thy right senses."'[1]

The effect of this style of preaching was greatly enhanced by an extreme variety of gesture, intonation, and manner. Considering the very small number of his ideas, it is a remarkable proof of the oratorical talents of Whitefield that his sermons were never charged with monotony. He frequently interspersed the more serious passages with anecdotes or illustra-

[1] Franklin's *Autobiography*, ch. viii.

tions. He sometimes even relieved them by a jest. Often, when the audience had been strung to the highest pitch of excitement, he would suddenly make a long, solemn and dramatic pause. He painted scenes as if they were visibly present to his eye, with all the fire and the animation of the most perfect actor. On one occasion, when illustrating the peril of sinners, he described with such an admirable power an old blind man deserted by his dog, tottering feebly over the desolate moor, endeavouring in vain to feel his way with his staff, and gradually drawing nearer and nearer to the verge of a dizzy precipice, that when he arrived at the final catastrophe, no less a person than Lord Chesterfield lost all self-possession, and was heard audibly exclaiming, 'Good God! he is gone.' On another occasion, preaching before seamen at New York, he adopted a nautical tone. 'Well, my boys, we have a clear sky, and are making fine headway over a smooth sea before a light breeze, and we shall soon lose sight of land. But what means this sudden lowering of the heavens, and that dark cloud arising from beneath the western horizon? Hark! don't you hear distant thunder? Don't you see those flashes of lightning? There is a storm gathering! Every man to his duty! How the waves arise and dash against the ship! The air is dark! the tempest rages! Our masts are gone! The ship is on her beam-ends! What next?' 'The long boat, take to the long boat!' shouted his excited hearers.

A very great part of his influence depended no doubt upon the matter of his discourses. He avoided all abstract reflections, all trains of reasoning, everything that could fatigue the attention, or rouse the intellect to question or oppose. His preaching was based upon the most confident assertions, and it dealt almost exclusively with topics which, if firmly believed,

can hardly fail to have a deep influence upon men. The utter depravity of human nature—the eternal tortures which are the doom of every unconverted man—the free salvation by Christ—the imminence of death—the necessity to salvation of a complete, supernatural change of character and emotions, were the subjects upon which he continually dilated. It is easy to understand that such topics, urged by a great orator, at a time when some of them were by no means familiar, should have exercised a far deeper influence than any dissertation upon the duties of man or the authority of revelation. Besides this, Whitefield was perpetually changing his audience. His style was never suffered to pall upon his hearers. The same sermon was again and again repeated, and at every repetition passages which appeared ineffective were retrenched, and a greater perfection of emphasis and intonation was acquired. Garrick and Foote declared that he never reached his highest perfection till the fortieth repetition. The picturesque scenes and the striking contrasts which out-of-door preaching furnished added to the effect, and the great multitude who were attracted by his eloquence gave in turn to that eloquence an additional power. A contagion of excitement was aroused, and an irresistible wave of sympathetic feeling rolled through the mighty host.

I have dwelt at some length upon the preaching of Whitefield, for it was of vital importance to the religious revival of the eighteenth century. But for the simultaneous appearance of a great orator and a great statesman, Methodism would probably have smouldered and at last perished like the very similar religious societies of the preceding century. Whitefield was utterly destitute of the organising skill which could alone give a permanence to the movement, and no talent is naturally more ephemeral than popular oratory; while

Wesley, though a great and impressive preacher, could scarcely have kindled a general enthusiasm had he not been assisted by an orator who had an unrivalled power of moving the passions of the ignorant. The institution of field-preaching by Whitefield in the February of 1739 carried the impulse through the great masses of the poor, while the foundation by Wesley, in the May of the same year, of the first Methodist chapel was the beginning of an organised body capable of securing and perpetuating the results that had been achieved. Dissensions, however, deep and lasting, speedily arose. In 1739 Methodism was merely an offshoot of Moravianism, but several causes combined to detach it from its parent stem. Wesley revolted against the more than episcopal authority which Count Zinzendorf exercised over the Brethren, and the Moravian teachers refused to acknowledge the supernatural character of the hysterical convulsions that now continually accompanied the preaching of Wesley. An Alsatian enthusiast, named Molther, whose mind was very uncongenial to that of Wesley, obtained great popularity among the Moravians, and led the sect into the wildest extravagances of mysticism and Antinomianism. 'No soul,' said one of their religious teachers, 'can be washed in the blood of Christ unless it first be brought to one in whom Christ is fully formed. But there are only two such ministers in London, Bell and Molther.' Another—a theological brazier—announced to his hearers that 'it is impossible for anyone to be a true Christian out of the Moravian Church.' The Moravian doctrine that no man is in a state of salvation if he has any doubt about his condition, which appears to have been at first accepted by Wesley, now became incredible to his mind. He preached openly against it, and taught that there were degrees of justifying faith. He protested against a kind of amorous, mystical, and sensuous language,

something like that which Catholics have frequently employed in the devotions of the Sacred Heart, which under the influence of Molther became common among the Moravians. Above all, he protested strongly against the Antinomianism which was rapidly springing out of their doctrine that we are justified by faith alone, and that conversion is accomplished by an instantaneous supernatural process in which we have no part. For believers it was said the ordinances of religion were not a matter of duty, necessity, or injunction, but only of choice, while for those who were not believers in the Moravian sense of the word, it was criminal to partake in them. 'For a man not born of God to read the Scriptures or come to the Lord's table is deadly poison.' All who had not experienced the sudden conversion were exhorted to await it 'in stillness.' 'To search the Scriptures, to pray or to communicate before we have faith, is to seek salvation by works, and such works must be laid aside before faith can be received.' 'A man,' said one of these teachers, 'may as well go to hell for praying as for thieving.'[1]

These extravagances do not appear to have formed part of the original teaching of the Moravians, and a few years later they were greatly qualified, but in 1740 they were at their height, and they precipitated the inevitable division. Wesley preached strongly against them. He was excluded from the Moravian pulpit in Fetter Lane. He then, accompanied by eighteen or nineteen followers, seceded from the society which he had himself founded, and which had been the centre of the movement, and formed, at a place called the Foundery, a new society, in July 1740. A fortnight later he addressed a long letter to the Moravian leaders in Germany enumerating and protesting against the

[1] See Tyerman's *Life of Wesley*, i. 302–305.

extravagances of their followers. From this time the breach between Methodism and Moravianism was complete.

Shortly before this schism a Calvinist had, it is said, been excluded by order of Charles Wesley from the society meeting on account of his assertion of the doctrines of election and reprobation, and the differences between Wesley and Whitefield on this ground were rapidly deepening. The Calvinism of Whitefield was much strengthened by connections he formed in America, and he at the same time grew more and more hostile to the doctrine of perfection, to which Wesley appeared more and more attached. Both Wesley and Whitefield appear to have sincerely desired to avoid a rupture, but each had many friends who urged them on, and neither of them was very capable of reticence or forbearance. Wesley, galled by an anonymous letter accusing him of withholding a portion of the Gospel in his sermons, submitted the question whether he should preach and print on election, to the decision of a lot, and the answer being in the affirmative he delivered and subsequently published that sermon on free grace which is probably the most powerful production of his pen. Whitefield, though he had at one time promised not to preach on the contested point, thought that this resolution was a sinful one. He told Wesley that the Gospels they believed in were different ones, and he both wrote and preached in favour of his views. A subordinate, but zealous and devoted preacher named Cennick took a still more decided course, and Wesley, having discovered that he was introducing disputes into the society and continually accusing the Wesleys of mutilating the Gospel, expelled him from the society. About fifty seceded with him. The Calvinistic Methodists were subsequently organised chiefly under the influence of the Countess of Huntingdon, but after the

death of Whitefield they never occupied a position at all comparable to that of the rival section. While Whitefield lived the rupture was never complete, and it was not until 1775 that a controversy broke out between the two sections, which was so virulent that it rendered reunion impossible. Whitefield to the last spoke of Wesley with a touching affection. On one occasion when a censorious Calvinist asked him whether he thought they would see John Wesley in heaven, 'I fear not,' said the great preacher; 'he will be so near the throne, and we shall be at such a distance, that we shall hardly get a sight of him.' He remembered him warmly in his will, and it was in obedience to the expressed wish of Whitefield that Wesley was selected to preach his funeral sermon.[1]

These internal dissensions, however, had but little effect upon the immediate prospects of the movement. Its success depended upon the zeal and abilities of its leaders, upon the evangelical doctrines which they had revived and which were peculiarly fitted to exercise a deep influence upon the people, and upon the institution of field-preaching, which brought those doctrines before vast multitudes who had scarcely before come into any contact with religion. The great difficulty was the small number of the teachers and the general hostility of the clergy, but this was remedied in the beginning of 1741 by the institution of lay preachers. Nelson and Maxfield were the two earliest. They had begun preaching in the preceding year without authorisation and apparently without concert, under the impulse of an overpowering missionary enthusiasm; and it was only very reluctantly, and chiefly in obedience to the

[1] Wesley himself said of him, long after the differences had broken out: 'Mr. Whitefield called upon me. He breathes nothing but peace and love. Bigotry cannot stand before him, but hides its head wherever he comes.'—*Journal*, 1766.

advice of his mother, that Wesley consented to sanction the step.

From the time of the institution of lay preachers Methodism became in a great degree independent of the Established Church. Its chapels multiplied in the great towns, and its itinerant missionaries penetrated to the most secluded districts. They were accustomed to preach in fields and gardens, in streets and lecture-rooms, in market-places and churchyards. On one occasion we find Whitefield at a fair mounting a stage which had been erected for some wrestlers, and there denouncing the pleasures of the world; on another, preaching among the mountebanks at Moorfields; on a third, attracting around his pulpit 10,000 of the spectators at a racecourse; on a fourth, standing beside the gallows at an execution to speak of death and of eternity. Wesley, when excluded from the pulpit of Epworth, delivered some of his most impressive sermons in the churchyard, standing on his father's tomb. Howell Harris, the apostle of Wales, encountering a party of mountebanks, sprang into their midst exclaiming, in a solemn voice, 'Let us pray,' and then proceeded to thunder forth the judgments of the Lord. Rowland Hill was accustomed to visit the great towns on market-day in order that he might address the people in the market-place, and to go from fair to fair preaching among the revellers from his favourite text, 'Come out from among them.' In this manner the Methodist preachers came in contact with the most savage elements of the population, and there were few forms of mob violence they did not experience. In 1741 one of their preachers named Seward, after repeated ill-treatment in Wales, was at last struck on the head while preaching at Monmouth, and died of the blow. In a riot, while Wheatley was preaching at Norwich, a poor woman with child perished from the

kicks and blows of the mob. At Wednesbury—a little town in Staffordshire—then very famous for its cock-fights—numerous houses were wrecked; the Methodists were stoned, beaten with cudgels, or dragged through the public kennels. Women were atrociously abused. The leaders of the mob declared their intention to destroy every Methodist in the county. Wesley himself appeared in the town, and the rioters speedily surrounded the house where he was staying. With the placid courage that never deserted him in danger, he descended alone and unarmed into their midst. His perfect calmness and his singularly venerable appearance quelled the most noisy, and he succeeded by a few well-chosen words in producing a sudden reaction. His captors, however, insisted on his accompanying them to a neighbouring justice, who exhorted them to disperse in peace. The night had now fallen, and Wesley was actually returning to Wednesbury protected by a portion of the very crowd which had attacked him, when a new mob poured in from an adjoining village. He was seized by the hair and dragged through the streets. Some struck at him with cudgels. Many cried to knock out his brains and kill him at once. A river was flowing near, and he imagined they would throw him into the water. Yet in that dreadful moment his self-possession never failed him. He uttered in loud and solemn tones a prayer to God. He addressed those who were nearest him with all the skill that a consummate knowledge of the popular character could supply, and he speedily won over to his side some of the most powerful of the leaders. Gradually the throng paused, wavered, divided; and Wesley returned almost uninjured to his house. To a similar courage he owed his life at Bolton, when the house where he was preaching was attacked, and at last burst open, by a furious crowd thirsting for his life. Again and again he preached,

like the other leaders of the movement, in the midst of showers of stones or tiles or rotten eggs. The fortunes of his brother were little different. At Cardiff, when he was preaching, women were kicked and their clothes set on fire by fireworks. At St. Ives and in the neighbouring villages the congregation were attacked with cudgels, and everything in the room where they were assembled was shattered to atoms. At Devizes a water-engine played upon the house where he was staying. His horses were seized. The house of one of his supporters was ransacked, and bull-dogs were let loose upon him. At Dublin Whitefield was almost stoned to death. At Exeter he was stoned in the very presence of the bishop. At Plymouth he was violently assaulted and his life seriously threatened by a naval officer.

Scenes of this kind were of continual occurrence, and they were interspersed with other persecutions of a less dangerous description. Drums were beaten, horns blown, guns let off, and blacksmiths hired to ply their noisy trade in order to drown the voices of the preachers. Once, at the very moment when Whitefield announced his text, the belfry gave out a peal loud enough to make him inaudible. On other occasions packs of hounds were brought with the same object, and once, in order to excite the dogs to fury, a live cat in a cage was placed in their midst. Fire-engines poured streams of fetid water upon the congregation. Stones fell so thickly that the faces of many grew crimson with blood. At Hoxton the mob drove an ox into the midst of the congregation. At Pensford the rabble, who had been baiting a bull, concluded their sport by driving the torn and tired animal full against the table on which Wesley was preaching. Sometimes we find innkeepers refusing to receive the Methodist leaders in their inns, farmers entering into an agreement to dismiss every labourer who attended a Methodist preacher, landlords expelling

all Methodists from their cottages, masters dismissing their servants because they had joined the sect. The magistrates, who knew by experience that the presence of a Methodist preacher was the usual precursor of disturbance or riot, looked on them with the greatest disfavour, and often scandalously connived at the persecutions they underwent. After the Wednesbury riots some Staffordshire magistrates issued a proclamation describing them as 'disorderly persons who go about raising routs and riots,'[1] and they enjoined the constables to search for and arrest them. At Cork, the grand jury formally presented Charles Wesley and some of his coadjutors as 'persons of ill fame, vagabonds, and common disturbers of his Majesty's peace,' and prayed that they might be transported.[2] The press-gang was then in full force and was often employed as a kind of irregular police for the purpose of carrying off obnoxious characters against whom no legal offence could be proved, and some of Wesley's preachers were thus pressed and carried off to the war.

These facts represent a serious and formidable persecution, directed against men who, whatever may have been their faults, were at least actuated by motives of the purest philanthropy. It is not, however, difficult to discover the causes of the antipathy they aroused. To the great majority of the clergy, whose parishes were invaded, and who were often themselves abusively attacked by ignorant lay preachers, they were naturally extremely obnoxious, and the 'Weekly Miscellany,' which was the organ of clerical opinion, was steadily hostile to the Methodist movement. Bitter, but not unprovoked, denunciations from the pulpit were the origin of the riots at Wednesbury and of nearly all the savage outbursts in Cornwall; and not a few of those

[1] *Journal*, 1743. [2] Ibid. 1749.

in other districts were directly instigated by Anglican clergymen. The example of the bishops encouraged the assaults. Gibson, indeed, wrote against the Methodists like a Christian and a gentleman, but Warburton and Lavington assailed them with the coarsest and most scurrilous invective. The first, ridiculing the doctrine of regeneration by the Holy Ghost, was not ashamed to write that the devil was 'man-midwife to the new birth;'[1] and the second insinuated an infamous parallel between the Methodist societies and the obscene rites of Paganism.[2] Usually the Methodists were denounced as Dissenters, but their leaders steadily repudiated the designation, and in England at least they met with little sympathy from the real Dissenters. The fierce fervour of Methodist devotion was as uncongenial to the spirit then prevailing in Dissent as it was to the spirit of the Established Church; and the Dissenters were at this time negotiating with a view to obtain full political privileges, and were therefore peculiarly indisposed to ally themselves with so unpopular a body as the Methodists. Watts, it is true, showed some courtesy to Whitefield, and Doddridge once admitted him to his pulpit, and preached himself once in Whitefield's tabernacle, but his conduct was severely and authoritatively censured by the leaders of his sect.[3] On one occasion Wesley mentions three Dissenting ministers formally excluding from the sacrament all who consented to hear him.[4]

Another and very common charge was that of Popery. This accusation probably arose from the fact that Catholicism was of all forms of religion the most hated, and, at a time when Jacobitism was still for-

[1] Warburton's *Doctrine of Grace*, bk. ii. c. iv.

[2] *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared.*

[3] Doddridge's *Diary*, iv. 274–294. Philip's *Life of Whitefield*, pp. 252–263.

[4] *Journal*, 1743.

midable, the most dreaded by Englishmen; and it derived some consistency from the fasts and other ascetic practices of the first Methodists, from the real resemblance which their style of preaching bore to that of the Missioner friars, and their outbursts of fanaticism and credulity to those recorded in the Lives of the Saints, and from the indulgent language in which Wesley sometimes spoke of Catholic books of devotion. His language, indeed, about Catholics often forms a striking contrast to the usual tone of his followers,[1] and it is a somewhat curious fact that one of his strongest and most persistent historical convictions was the innocence of Mary Stuart, and the eminent nobility of her character.[2] Considering the immense doctrinal chasm between the Catholics and the Methodists, the pertinacity with which the charge of Popery was repeated against the latter is very remarkable. 'Unless, as I apprehend,' wrote Horace Walpole, 'the Methodists are secret Papists—and no doubt they copy, build on, and extend their rites towards that model—Popery will not revive here.'[3] Hogarth, in his caricature of the Methodist preacher, represents his wig as falling aside and revealing beneath, the shaven crown of the Popish friar. Warburton noticed the striking analogies between the 'Journal' of Whitefield and the visions of Loyola;[4] and no less a writer than Archdeacon Blackburne, the well-known author of 'The Confessional'

[1] Thus—to quote one example from many—he mentions translating from the French 'one of the most useful tracts I ever saw for those who desire to be fervent in spirit,' and adds: 'How little does God regard men's opinions! What a multitude of wrong opinions are embraced by all the members of the Church of Rome! Yet how highly favoured many of them have been!' —*Journal*, 1768.

[2] He recurs to the subject again and again. See his *Journal*, May 1761, April 1768, Nov. 1769, Jan. 1776, Feb. 1786.

[3] Walpole's *Mem. of George III.* iii. 47.

[4] Tyerman's *Life of Whitefield*, i. 282.

countenanced the charge that the Methodists were secret Papists.[1] Bishop Lavington, in his 'Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists,' made the resemblance the chief ground of his attack. The accusation was frequently brought from the pulpit, and it sank deeply into the popular mind. Cries of 'Popery, Popery!' interrupted the Methodist preachers.[2] It was reported that Wesley was born and educated in Rome,[3] and in 1744, when all Catholics were ordered to leave London, Wesley thought it advisable to delay his intended departure from the metropolis lest it should countenance the charge.[4] His brother was once actually summoned before the magistrates at Wakefield for having, in the usual Methodistic phraseology, prayed that 'God would bring home His banished ones,' which was construed by some of his hearers into a prayer for the Pretender.[5] The real sentiments of Wesley on the subject appear in several controversial tracts which he wrote, not only against the doctrines, but even against the toleration of Catholicism, in the earnestness with which he taught the Lutheran tenet of justification by faith, and in the emphatic sentence in his 'Journal' in which he pronounced his opinion about the position of Catholics. 'I pity them much, having the same assurance that Jesus is the Christ, and that no Romanist can expect to be saved according to the terms of his covenant.'[6]

Other charges, however, were brought against the Methodists which were far more reasonable. A more appalling system of religious terrorism, one more fitted to unhinge a tottering intellect and to darken and embitter a sensitive nature, has seldom existed. The

---

[1] Wesley's *Journal*, 1768.
[2] Ibid. 1741.
[3] Ibid. 1739
[4] Ibid. 1744.
[5] See Lady Huntingdon's *Memoirs*, i. 68.
[6] Wesley's *Journal*, 1739.

Methodist preached especially to the nerves. His favourite tenet was that according to the Christian creed a harmless and useful life, an orthodox belief, and a constant attendance on the ordinances of religion, were together utterly unable to save men from an eternity of torture. With the most impassioned tone and gestures, with every artifice that could heighten the dramatic effect of his words, he expatiated upon the certainty of death, upon the terrors of judgment, upon the undying agonies of hell, upon the lost condition of mankind. These were the almost constant subjects of his preaching, and he dwelt upon them till he scared his hearers to the verge of insanity, and engendered a nervous disease, which propagated itself rapidly through the congregation. Many fell to the ground convulsed with paroxysms of agony. Some lay without sense or motion; others trembled exceedingly, or rent the air with piercing screams, which continued for hours without intermission; others imagined that they were possessed by demons, shouted, clapped their hands, or burst into wild fits of hysterical laughter.

The sermons of Berridge, the Vicar of Everton, appear to have been attended to a very peculiar extent by these phenomena, and Wesley has inserted in his 'Journal' a graphic description of them by an eye-witness: 'I heard many cry out, especially children, whose agonies were amazing. One of the eldest, a girl of ten or twelve years old, was full in my view, in violent contortions of body, and weeping aloud, I think incessantly, during the whole service. . . . While poor sinners felt the sentence of death in their souls, what sounds of distress did I hear! . . . Some shrieking, some roaring aloud. The most general was a loud breathing, like that of people half-strangled and gasping for life. And, indeed, almost all the cries were like those of human creatures dying in bitter anguish.

Great numbers wept without any noise; others fell down as dead; some sinking in silence; some with extreme noise and violent agitation. I stood on the pew seat, as did a young man in an opposite pew—an able-bodied, fresh, healthy countryman. But, in a moment, when he seemed to think of nothing less, down he dropped with a violence inconceivable. The adjoining pews seemed shook with his fall. I heard afterwards the stamping of his feet, ready to break the boards as he lay in strong convulsions at the bottom of the pew. . . . Among the children who felt the arrows of the Almighty I saw a sturdy boy about eight years old who roared above his fellows, and seemed in his agony to struggle with the strength of a grown man. His face was red as scarlet: and almost all on whom God laid His hand turned either very red or almost black. . . . A stranger well dressed, who stood facing me, fell backward to the wall; then forward on his knees, wringing his hands and roaring like a bull. His face at first turned quite red, then almost black. He rose and ran against the wall till Mr. Keeling and another held him. He screamed out, "Oh! what shall I do? What shall I do? Oh for one drop of the blood of Christ!" As he spoke, God set his soul at liberty; he knew his sins were blotted out, and the rapture he was in seemed too great for human nature to bear.'[1] While a preacher named Hicks was preaching, 'fifteen or sixteen persons felt the arrows of the Lord, and dropped down. A few of them cried out with the utmost violence and little intermission for some hours; while the rest made no great noise, but continued struggling as in the pangs of death. I observed besides these, one little girl deeply convinced, and a boy nine or ten years old. Both these, and

[1] *Journal*, 1759.

several others, when carried into the parsonage-house, either lay as dead or struggled with all their might. But in a short time their cries increased beyond measure, so that the loudest singing could scarce be heard. Some at last called on me to pray, which I did, and for a time all was calm. But the storm soon began again. . . . Though some received consolation, others remained in deep sorrow of heart. Upon the whole I remark that few ancient people experience anything of this work of God, and scarce any of the rich. These generally show either an utter contempt of, or enmity to it.'[1]

Scenes of this kind continually accompanied the preaching of Wesley in the first years of the movement, and he has himself recorded them in his 'Journal. Thus—to give but a few examples—preaching on one occasion among the criminals at Newgate, he tells us that 'they dropped on every side as thunderstruck. . . . One was so wounded by the sword of the Spirit that you would have imagined she could not live a moment.' 'At Baldwin Street my voice could scarce be heard amidst the groanings of some and the cries of others. . . . A Quaker who stood by was not a little displeased . . . when he himself dropped down as thunderstruck. The agony he was in was even terrible to behold. We besought God not to lay folly to his charge, and he soon lifted up his head and cried aloud, "Now I know that thou art a prophet of the Lord."' At Wapping 'some sank down, and there remained no strength in them; others exceedingly trembled and quaked. Some were torn with a kind of convulsive motion in every part of their bodies, and that so violently that often four or five persons could not hold one of them. . . . One woman was offended greatly, being sure they

[1] *Journal*, 1759.

might help it if they would . . . and was got three or four yards when she also dropped down in as violent an agony as the rest.' On another occasion, 'while I was speaking, one before me dropped down as dead, and presently a second and a third. Five others sank down in half an hour, most of whom were in violent agonies. . . . We called upon the Lord and He gave us an answer of peace. One, indeed, continued an hour in strong pain, and one or two more for three days. But the rest were greatly comforted.'[1]

It was frequently observed by Wesley that his preaching rarely affected the rich and the educated. It was over the ignorant and credulous that it exercised its most appalling power, and it is difficult to overrate the mental anguish it must sometimes have produced. Timid and desponding natures unable to convince themselves that they had undergone a supernatural change, gentle and affectionate natures who believed that those who were dearest to them were descending into everlasting fire, must have often experienced pangs compared with which the torments of the martyr were insignificant. The confident assertions of the Methodist preacher and the ghastly images he continually evoked poisoned their imaginations, haunted them in every hour of weakness or depression, discoloured all their judgments of the world, and added a tenfold horror to the darkness of the grave. Sufferings of this description, though among the most real and the most terrible that superstition can inflict, are so hidden in their nature that they leave few traces in history; but it is impossible to read the journals of Wesley without feeling that they were most widely diffused. Many were thrown into paroxysms of extreme, though usually transient, agony; many doubtless nursed a secret sorrow which

[1] *Journal*, 1739.

corroded all the happiness of their lives, while not a few became literally insane. On one occasion Wesley was called to the bedside of a young woman at Kingswood. 'She was nineteen or twenty years old,' he tells us, 'but, it seems, could not write or read. I found her on the bed, two or three persons holding her. It was a terrible sight. Anguish, horror, and despair above all description appeared in her pale face. The thousand distortions of her whole body showed how the dogs of hell were gnawing at her heart. The shrieks intermixed were scarce to be endured. But her stony eyes could not weep. She screamed out as soon as words could find their way, "I am damned, damned, lost for ever; six days ago you might have helped me. But it is past. I am the devil's now . . . I will go with him to hell. I cannot be saved." They sang a hymn, and for a time she sank to rest, but soon broke out anew in incoherent exclamations, "Break, break, poor stony hearts! Will you not break? What more can be done for stony hearts? I am damned that you may be saved!" . . . She then fixed her eyes in the corner of the ceiling, and said, "There he is, ay, there he is! Come, good devil, come! Take me away." . . . We interrupted her by calling again on God, on which she sank down as before, and another young woman began to roar out as loud as she had done.' For more than two hours Wesley and his brother continued praying over her. At last the paroxysms subsided and the patients joined in a hymn of praise.

A few days later a similar case occurred in Bristol. The woman afflicted 'lay on the ground furiously gnashing her teeth, and after a while roared aloud. It was not easy for three or four persons to hold her, especially when the name of Jesus was named. We prayed; the violence of her symptoms ceased, though without a complete deliverance.' She apparently believed, and Wesley

undoubtedly did, that she was possessed by a devil. When Wesley, some hours after his first interview, came into the room, 'she began screaming, then broke into a horrid laughter, mixed with blasphemy grievous to hear. One, who from many circumstances apprehended a preternatural agent to be concerned in this, asking, "How didst thou dare to enter into a Christian?" was answered, "She is not a Christian. She is mine."' In this case the agonies continued more than thirty-six hours, when 'her pangs ceased in a moment. She was filled with peace, and knew that the son of wickedness was departed from her.'[1]

On another occasion, while Wesley was conducting the public devotions, a poor woman, who was known to be no dissembler, attracted the attention of all. 'One so violently and variously torn of the evil one did I never see before. Sometimes she laughed till almost strangled, then broke out into cursing and blaspheming, then stamped and struggled with incredible strength, so that four or five could scarce hold her. She cried out, "O eternity, eternity! O that I had no soul! O that I had never been born!" At last she faintly called on Christ to help her, and the violence of her pangs ceased.'[2] Another patient—on this occasion it was a man—when reading one of Wesley's sermons, 'changed colour, fell off his chair and began screaming terribly, and beating himself against the ground, . . . his breast heaving as in the pangs of death, and great drops of sweat trickling down his face.'[3] A poor woman sitting reading the Bible, suddenly threw the book away, exclaiming, 'I am good enough. I will never read or pray more.' When afterwards questioned by Wesley as to whether she desired to be saved, 'she replied, "I am saved; I ail nothing; I am happy." Yet it was easy to discern she was in the most violent agony of body and mind,

[1] *Journal*, 1739. [2] Ibid. 1740. [3] Ibid. 1739.

sweating exceedingly notwithstanding the severe frost, and not continuing in the same posture a moment. Upon our beginning to pray she raged above measure, but soon sank down as dead. In a few minutes she revived and joined in prayer. We left her for the present in peace.'[1]

In these instances the paroxysms proved transient, but such was not always the case. Religious madness, which, from the nature of its hallucinations, is usually the most miserable of all the forms of insanity, was in this, as in many later revivals, of no unfrequent occurrence.[2] Here, as in the preceding cases, I confine myself to the statements of the leader of the movement. He has recorded three cases in which persons were placed under medical supervision, or in lunatic asylums, on account of phenomena which Wesley regarded as simply the consequences of conversion.[3] Another convert 'was expelled out of his society as a madman, and being disowned by his friends, and despised and forsaken of all men, lived obscure and unknown for a few months, and then went to Him whom his soul loved.'[4] A clergyman was called on to baptise a child. 'It was

[1] *Journal*, 1741.

[2] The immense amount of insanity produced by this kind of preaching is well known to those who have studied the subject. Archdeacon Stopford, in a very sensible little book, called *The Work and the Counter-work*, describing one of the recent revivals in the North of Ireland, says: 'In a very brief space of time and in a very limited circle of inquiry, I saw or heard of more than twenty cases of insanity. I fear a little more inquiry would have extended it largely' (p. 61).

[3] *Journal*, 1739, 1740. Another convert, named Joseph Periam, having read a sermon by Whitefield on Regeneration, was so impressed by it that he 'prayed so loud, and fasted so long, and sold "all he had" so literally, that his family sent him to Bethlehem madhouse. There he was treated as Methodistically mad.' He was ultimately released on the condition of emigrating to Georgia. Philip's *Life of Whitefield*, pp. 84, 85. See, too, on the madness accompanying the movement, Leslie Stephen's *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, ii. 430.

[4] *Journal*, 1740.

observed his voice, which had been lost several years, was entirely restored. He read the office with great emotion and many tears, so as to astonish the whole congregation. But going home from church he behaved in so strange a manner that it was thought necessary to confine him. During the first week of his confinement he was for constraining every one that came near him to kneel down and pray, and frequently cried out, "You will be lost, you will be damned, unless you know your sins are forgiven." Mr. —— roundly averred that the Methodists had turned his head. After seven or eight days he grew much worse, though still with intervals of reason; and in about a fortnight, by a judgment mixed with mercy, God took him to Himself.'[1] Another case is still sadder. 'A gentlewoman of an unspotted character, sitting at home on May 4, 1747, cried out that something seized her by the side. Then she said it was in her mouth. Quickly after she complained of her head. From that time she wept continually for four months, and afterwards grew outrageous, but always insisted that God had forsaken her, and that the devil possessed her body and soul. I found it availed nothing to reason with her; she only blasphemed the more, cursing God and vehemently desiring, yet fearing, to die. However, she suffered me to pray, only saying it signified not, for God had given her up.'[2]

It is easy to understand the opposition which a preaching attended by such consequences must have produced. Not only the peace of parishes, but also the harmony of households, was continually destroyed. Men were made morally, and sometimes even physically, incapable of discharging their ordinary duties, and were often thrown for long periods into a condition of religious despondency that made life almost unendurable. One man, after a religious conversation, 'turned and

[1] *Journal*, 1751. [2] Ibid. 1749.

hastened home, fancying he heard the devil hastening after him all the way. For forty hours he never closed his eyes, nor tasted meat or drink.'[1] Another 'had no rest day or night, feeling he was under the full power of the devil. He was utterly incapable of any business, so that he was obliged to shut up his shop. Thus he wandered up and down in exquisite torture for just eighteen months.'[2] A poor woman, 'in the bloom of youth, was brought, by mere anguish of soul, to the gates of death.'[3] Another, 'after many years' mourning, was filled with peace and joy in believing. In the midst of this, without any discernible cause, such a cloud overwhelmed her that she could not believe her sins were forgiven her at all, or that there was any such thing as forgiveness of sins.'[4]

In the intense religious enthusiasm that was generated, many of the ties of life were snapped in twain. Children treated with contempt the commands of their parents, students the rules of their colleges, clergymen the discipline of their Church. The whole structure of society, and almost all the amusements of life, appeared criminal. The fairs, the mountebanks, the public rejoicings of the people, were all Satanic. It was sinful for a woman to wear any gold ornament or any brilliant dress.[5] It was even sinful for a man to exercise the common prudence of laying by a certain portion of his income.[6] When Whitefield proposed to a lady to marry him, he thought it necessary to say, 'I bless God, if I know anything of my own heart, I am free from that foolish passion which the world calls love.' 'I trust I love you only for God, and desire to be joined to you only by His commands, and for His sake.'[7] It

[1] *Journal*, 1749. [2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid. 1761. [4] Ibid. 1741.
[5] See Southey's *Wesley* (Bohn's ed.), pp. 546, 547.
[6] Ibid. pp. 561–563. [7] Gledstone's *Whitefield*, pp. 207–209.

is perhaps not very surprising that Whitefield's marriage, like that of Wesley, proved very unhappy. Theatres and the reading of plays were absolutely condemned, and Methodists employed all their influence with the authorities to prevent the erection of the former.[1] It seems to have been regarded as a divine judgment that once, when 'Macbeth' was being acted at Drury Lane, a real thunderstorm mingled with the mimic thunder in the witch scene.[2] Dancing was, if possible, even worse than the theatre.[3] 'Dancers,' said Whitefield, 'please the devil at every step;' and it was said that his visit to a town usually put 'a stop to the dancing-school, the assemblies, and every pleasant thing.' He made it his mission to 'bear testimony against the detestable diversions of this generation;' and he declared that no 'recreations, considered as such, can be innocent.'[4] A poor Kingswood collier was noted for his skill in playing the violin. He passed under Methodist influence, and at once consigned his instrument to the flames. Wesley was a man of powerful intellect and cultivated taste, yet we find him objecting to the statues at Stourton, among other reasons, 'be-

---

[1] Tyerman's *Wesley*, ii. 514. Sidney's *Life of Rowland Hill*, p. 187.

[2] *Journal*, 1755. So Rowland Hill, in his *Tract against Public Amusements*, speaks of the theatre 'presuming to mock the voice of God in His thunderings and lightnings.'

[3] When Rowland Hill was still an Eton boy he was obliged to go to a birthday party where the guests amused themselves by this dreadful exercise. He has himself described his sensations. 'They danced two hours before tea; enough to give me a surfeit of it although I did not dance at all, nor come till after they had begun some time. Oh, glory be to grace, *free* grace, I knew I was out of my element, for oh, what a fluctuation my poor soul was in! How hard a trial it is to see the honour of that God we love thrown down to the ground! How hard it is to see our poor fellow sinners glory in their perfection of wickedness!'—Sidney's *Life of Rowland Hill*, p. 20.

[4] See Lavington's *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists* (ed. 1833), p. 15. Gledstone's *Whitefield*, p. 180.

cause I cannot admire the images of devils; and we know the gods of the heathens are but devils,'[1] and his only comment upon the treasures of art and nature recently amassed in the British Museum was, 'What account will a man give to the Judge of quick and dead for a life spent in collecting all these?'[2] But perhaps the most striking illustration of this side of Methodist teaching is furnished by the rules he drew up for the school which he founded at Kingswood. The little children rose every morning, winter and summer, at four, and were directed in the first place to spend nearly an hour in private devotions. 'As we have no play-days,' he adds, '(the school being taught every day in the year but Sunday), so neither do we allow any time for play on any day; he that plays when he is a child will play when he is a man.'[3]

Accompanying this asceticism we find an extraordinary revival of the grossest superstition. It was a natural consequence of the essentially emotional character of Methodism that its disciples should imagine that every strong feeling or impulse within them was a direct inspiration of God or Satan. The language of Whitefield —the language in a great degree of all the members of the sect—was that of men who were at once continually inspired[4] and the continual objects of miraculous interposition. In every perplexity they imagined that, by casting lots or opening their Bibles at random, they could obtain a supernatural answer to their inquiries.

---

[1] *Journal*, 1776.

[2] Ibid. 1781.

[3] See the account of the Kingswood School in Wesley's *Works*, vol. xiii. As might have been expected, such rules soon proved impossible to execute, and Wesley complained bitterly of the condition of the school. The pupils 'mix, yea, fight with the colliers' children. They ought never to play, but they do every day, yea, in the school.' Tyerman's *Life of Wesley*, iii. 397.

[4] See the remarks of Doddridge and Watts upon Whitefield. Tyerman's *Life of Whitefield*, i. 220, 221.

The sun shone oppressively on Wesley when he was preaching. He lifted up his thoughts to heaven, and at once a cloud obscured its ray.[1] His horse was lame, his head was aching—he thought of the power of God to cure man and beast, and the lameness and the headache disappeared.[2] In the neighbourhood of a race-course near Sutton, in Yorkshire, an earthquake, accompanied by a considerable landslip, had occurred. Wesley assures us that it was impossible to account for it by any natural agency. It was effected directly by the Almighty, 'who arose to shake terribly the earth; who purposely chose such a place, where there is so great a concourse of nobility and gentry every year . . . that all who travel one of the most frequented roads in England might see it almost whether they would or no.'[3] His journals are full of histories of ghosts, of second-sight, of miracles that had taken place among his disciples. He tells us among other things how a preacher in an inland town in Ireland became suddenly conscious of the fact that at that moment the French were landing at Carrickfergus; how a painful tumour, which had defied the efforts of physicians, disappeared instantaneously at a prayer;[4] how a poor woman, who appeared crippled by a severe fall, heard a voice within her saying, 'Name the name of Christ, and thou shalt stand,' and, on complying with the command, was at once cured;[5] how a man at the point of death by a violent rupture, was restored by the prayers of the society, and continued for several years in health and in the love of God, till he relapsed into sin, when his disorder at once returned and soon hurried him to the grave.[6]

Among the miracles which he considered particularly

---

[1] *Journal*, 1755.
[2] Ibid. 1746.
[3] Ibid. 1755.
[4] Ibid. 1761.
[5] Ibid. 1756.
[6] Ibid. 1757.

well attested are the following: A man in a moment of passion exclaimed that he wished his right hand might burn off if he left a sixpence to his son; but he afterwards repented and left him his whole estate. After death, his body being laid out in a bed, a fire, without any visible reason, began to eat through it. His widow, attracted suddenly by the smell to the room where he was lying, found the corpse in the midst of smoke, the right arm and part of the head and ribs burnt, and the brains and entrails protruding. No natural cause could be discovered. On throwing water on the body it hissed like hot iron, and when the charred remains were inclosed in the coffin, a burning and crackling noise was heard within, and when the coffin was brought to the burial, the steeple of the church shook and fell. This anecdote, Wesley assures us he received from eye and ear witnesses.[1] A Catholic girl, once reading the Mass-book, was struck blind. She continued in a state of partial blindness, unable to read one word, till she one day cast her eyes on the New Testament, and saw plainly; but whenever she turned to the Mass-book, her blindness, for the time, returned.[2] A woman named Elizabeth Hobson, in whose accuracy Wesley had the most perfect faith, professed to live in daily and intimate intercourse with ghosts, who appeared to her enveloped sometimes in a celestial, sometimes in a lurid and gloomy light. The account of her many visions and her many conversations with spirits is extremely curious, but it is too long for quotation.[3] It will be sufficient to say that, being engaged in a lawsuit about the possession of a house, the ghost of her grandfather, to whom it had formerly belonged, warmly espoused

---

[1] *Journal*, 1757.

[2] Ibid. 1758.

[3] See this very curious history in the *Journal*, May 1768. The substance was taken down by Wesley from the lips of the visionary.

her cause, appeared to her to urge her to change her attorney, and gave her much other good advice in the prosecution of her suit.

Supernatural interferences with such an object being in no degree incredible to the mind of Wesley, it is not surprising that he should have welcomed all accounts of visions with a distinctly religious end. One woman in a trance had a vision of Heaven and Hell very similar to those of many Catholic saints.[1] Another was prepossessed against the Methodists, but Christ appeared to her in a dream, rebuked her frivolity and inconstancy, and told her that the new preachers were the servants of God.[2] A third was converted by a vision of angels,[3] and a fourth by a vision of the Crucifixion.[4]

In all matters relating to Satanic interference, Wesley was especially credulous. The abolition of the laws against witchcraft, which closed the fountain of an incalculable amount of undeserved suffering, would probably not have taken place without a violent struggle if the Methodist movement had had an earlier development. Wesley again and again reiterated, with the utmost emphasis, his belief in witchcraft, and again and again attributed its downfall to religious scepticism. 'It is true likewise,' he wrote, 'that the English in general, and indeed most of the men of learning in Europe, have given up all accounts of witches and apparitions as mere old wives' fables. I am sorry for it, and I willingly take this opportunity of entering my solemn protest against this violent compliment which so many that believe the Bible pay to those who do not believe it. I owe them no such service. I take knowledge that these are at the bottom of the outcry which has been raised, and with such insolence spread throughout the nation, in direct opposition not only to the

[1] *Journal*, 1746.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid. 1748.
[4] Ibid.

Bible, but to the suffrages of the wisest and best men of all ages and nations. They well know (whether Christians know it or not) that the giving up witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible.' 'I cannot give up to all the Deists in Great Britain the existence of witchcraft till I give up the credit of all history, sacred and profane.'[1] He had no doubt that the physical contortions into which so many of his hearers fell were due to the direct agency of Satan, who tore the converts as they were coming to Christ.[2] He had himself seen men and women who were literally possessed by devils;[3] he had witnessed forms of madness which were not natural, but diabolical,[4] and he had experienced in his own person the hysterical affections which resulted from supernatural agency.[5]

On the other hand, if Satanic agencies continually convulsed those who were coming to the faith, divine judgments as frequently struck down those who opposed it. Every illness, every misfortune that befell an opponent was believed to be supernatural. Molther, the Moravian minister, shortly after the Methodists had separated from the Moravians, was seized with a passing illness. 'I believe,' wrote Wesley, 'it was the hand of God that was upon him.'[6] Numerous cases were cited of sudden and fearful judgments which fell upon the adversaries of the cause. A clergyman at Bristol, standing up to preach against the Methodists, 'was suddenly seized with a rattling in his throat, attended with a hideous

---

[1] *Journal*, 1768, 1776. He elsewhere complains that 'Infidels have hooted witchcraft out of the world, and the complaisant Christians in large numbers have joined with them in the cry.'—Ibid. (1770). So, too, he says in one of his letters: 'I have no doubt of the substance both of Glanvil's and Cotton Mather's narratives.'—Tyerman's *Wesley*, iii. 171. See, too, Wesley's *Letter to Middleton*.

[2] *Journal*, 1743.

[3] Ibid. 1746, 1759, 1764.

[4] Ibid. 1759.

[5] Ibid. 1740.

[6] Ibid.

groaning,' and on the next Sunday he died.[1] At Todmorden a minister was struck with a violent fit of palsy immediately after preaching against the Methodists.[2] At Enniscorthy a clergyman, having preached for some time against the Methodists, deferred the conclusion of his discourse to the following Sunday. Next morning he was raging mad, imagined that devils were about him, 'and not long after, without showing the least sign of hope, he went to his account.'[3] At Kingswood a man began a vehement invective against Wesley and Methodism. 'In the midst he was struck raving mad.'[4] A woman, seeing a crowd waiting for Wesley at a church door, exclaimed, 'They are waiting for their God.' She at once fell senseless to the ground, and next day expired.[5] 'A party of young men rowed up to Richmond to disturb the sermons of Rowland Hill. The boat sank, and all of them were drowned.'[6] At Sheffield the captain of a gang who had long troubled the field-preachers, was bathing with his companions. 'Another dip,' he said, 'and then for a bit of sport with the Methodists.' He dived, struck his head against a stone, and appeared no more.[7]

By such anecdotes and by such beliefs a fever of enthusiasm was sustained. In many cases the devotions of the Methodists were almost or altogether delirious. Some of the Foundery Society professed to feel the blood of Christ streaming down their arms, backs, and throats. A man two or three days after his conversion rode into Newcastle shouting that God had revealed to

---

[1] *Journal*, 1743.
[2] Ibid. 1752.
[3] Ibid. 1769.
[4] *Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion.*
[5] Tyerman's *Life of Wesley*, iii. 606.
[6] Sidney's *Life of Rowland Hill*, p. 114.
[7] Tyerman, ii. 561. See, too, some other cases collected by Warburton, *Doctrine of Grace*, bk. ii. c. xi.

him that he should be a king and should trample his enemies under his feet. Some persuaded themselves from the Book of Revelation that they were exempted from the common lot of men and would never die. A preacher named George Bell attempted to open the eyes of the blind, and prophesied the immediate destruction of the world. The strong spirit of superstitious terror which existed in England was most impressively shown on the occasion of the earthquake of 1750. The year was ushered in by an Aurora Borealis, which mantled the north-eastern sky in fire, and in February a terrific thunderstorm filled Bristol with consternation. On February 8 and on March 8 severe shocks of earthquake were felt in London. No houses, indeed, were overthrown, and no lives were lost; but chairs rocked, church bells rang in the steeples, the porcelain rattled on the shelves, and a loud rumbling noise was heard. On the second occasion the shock was greater than on the first; it was especially felt in the western portion of the city. Several chimneys fell. Large collections of china were thrown down and broken in the house of a private collector in Piccadilly, and in a china shop in St. James's Street. A maid in Charterhouse Square was flung out of her bed and broke her arm. The rarity of the event, and the fact that the shocks occurred with increasing violence on the same day of two successive months, added to the panic. A crazy soldier predicted that on April 8 the cities of London and Westminster would be destroyed. He was soon sent to Bedlam, but a wild terror was produced. Horace Walpole assures us that in three days 730 coaches of fugitives hastening to the country were counted at Hyde Park Corner. Women who were unable to leave London provided thick gowns, which obtained the name of 'earthquake gowns,' in order that they might pass the dreaded night in the

open air. The churches were crowded with penitents; and open profligacy almost disappeared. Sherlock, the Bishop of London, called the people to repentance, in a pastoral of which no less than 100,000 copies are said to have been sold. He dilated especially upon the blasphemy that was everywhere heard, the multiplication of infidel works, the innumerable brothels, the existence of unnatural vice, the lewd pictures that were exposed to view in the streets, the general neglect of public worship, the great and alarming increase of Popery. Romaine availed himself of the prevailing disposition to preach two of his most famous sermons, his 'Alarm to a Careless World,' and his 'Duty of Watchfulness Enforced.' On the evening of the fatal day the terror rose to its height. Thousands ran frantically through the streets. The Methodist chapels were thronged, and Charles Wesley preached for hours almost without intermission. Through the whole night the fields and open spaces about the metropolis were crowded, and towards midnight Whitefield took his stand in the middle of Hyde Park, preaching to a dense mass of awestruck and affrighted hearers upon the judgments of the Lord. It was not until the morning dawned that the panic subsided and the many streams of business and pleasure returned into their accustomed channels.[1]

It is not wonderful that, mixing with the passionate devotion I have described, there should have been a certain tincture of baser elements. So much enthusiasm and so much credulity could hardly exist without attracting some impostors; the violently emotional character of Methodist piety was liable to dangerous reactions, and the habit of attributing every sudden impulse to a spiritual inspiration, and of habitually

---

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1750. Walpole's *Letters to Mann*. Tyerman's *Wesley*, ii. 72, 73. March and April 1750.

depreciating good works, was not always favourable to morality. An Antinomian tendency had early appeared among the Moravians, and Wesley had during the greater part of his career to repress the same spirit among his own followers. He has preserved part of his dialogue with an Antinomian teacher at Birmingham, who assured him that being no longer under the law he was the heir to all things, and had a right to take whatever goods and to lie with whatever woman he pleased. The well-known Dr. Dodd, who was hanged for forgery, had been at one time looked upon as an Evangelical preacher, and it was from Wesley that he derived much comfort in the days before his execution. James Wheatley, who was one of the most popular preachers of Methodism, lapsed into the worst licentiousness, and was at last found guilty of adultery and gross indecency. In Wesley's own family the same evil appeared. A young man named Hall—a pupil and intimate friend of Wesley—succeeded in winning the heart of Wesley's youngest sister. He then announced his intended marriage to her father and brother, stating that God had revealed to him that he must marry, and that his wife was to be Keziah Wesley. The marriage was agreed upon, when shortly before its celebration, to the astonishment of Wesley, he abandoned his intended bride, professed his attachment to her elder sister, and boldly declared that his inconstancy was due to a new divine revelation. The supposed revelation was obeyed, and the deserted sister fell into a lingering illness and died of grief, while Hall speedily developed into an open profligate. In at least one case the conduct of Wesley himself towards a reputed convert was more than injudicious. He selected a woman named Sarah Ryan, who had three husbands living, who lived apart from them all, and was at this time only thirty-three, to be his Bristol

housekeeper, the matron of his Kingswood school, and the object of a correspondence that was conducted on his part in a strain of the most high-flown religious admiration and affection. It is not surprising that some scandal should have been caused, or that the naturally jealous disposition of his wife should have been goaded almost to madness.[1]

The movement was also marred by its full share of personal and sectarian antipathies. Whatever calumny, whatever injustice, whatever violence of language was displayed by the enemies of Methodism, they never equalled the ferocity exhibited by the saints in their internal quarrels. It was in 1770 that Wesley, alarmed at the progress of Antinomianism, and connecting it with the fatalism of the Calvinists, caused some minutes to be published reflecting on Calvinism, and censuring the general depreciation of good works. He was accused of teaching justification by works, and his speedy and emphatic disclaimer was not sufficient to prevent a schism between the Arminian and Calvinist Methodists. Whitefield, who had always laboured to heal divisions, and who alone could have prevented the scandal that ensued, had died a few months before. The Calvinistic party acknowledged Lady Huntingdon as their leader, and she excluded all Arminians from her chapels, and removed Fletcher of Madeley from his position at the head of her college of Trevecca. Soon after, the leaders of her party began an attack upon Wesley, which in its outrageous scurrility has never been surpassed. Berridge of Everton satirised him in doggerel verse as a fox,

> The most perfect and holy and sly,
> That e'er turned a coat or could pilfer and lie,

while Toplady and Rowland Hill assailed him in the

[1] Tyerman's *Life of Wesley*, ii. 109, 285–289. Wesley actually published himself this most extraordinary correspondence. Mrs. Wesley soon after left her husband's house.

most abusive prose. Their pamphlets, though utterly worthless in themselves, are not without a certain historic interest, as the writers were among the special saints of a sect which has always professed a special sanctity; and they will appear the more remarkable when we remember that Toplady was then a young man of thirty, while Wesley, besides his other claims to respect, was now verging on seventy. Among the pamphlets which rapidly succeeded each other we find such titles as 'An Old Fox Tarred and Feathered,' 'Farrago Doubly Distilled,' 'Pope John.' 'I much question,' wrote Toplady, 'whether a man that dies an Arminian can go to heaven.' 'Arminianism lies within a bowshot of Socinianism and Deism.' He pronounced his great opponent to be 'without honour, veracity, or justice;' to be 'the most rancorous hater of the Gospel system that ever appeared in this land;' to be 'a low and puny tadpole in divinity,' actuated by 'Satanic shamelessness and Satanic guilt.' In his more charitable moments he contented himself with what Robert Hall calls 'presenting a prayer in the spirit of an indictment,' praying that 'He in whose hands the hearts of all men are may make even this opposer of grace a monument of His almighty power to save.' 'God is witness,' he added, 'how earnestly I wish it may consist with the divine will to touch the heart and open the eyes of that unhappy man.' Of the language of Rowland Hill a very short specimen will be sufficient. In a pamphlet of not more than forty pages he calls Wesley, among other names, 'a designing wolf,' 'a dealer in stolen wares,' 'as unprincipled as a rook, and as silly as a jackdaw;' 'a grey-headed enemy of all righteousness,' 'a wretch,' guilty of 'wilful, gross, and abominable untruth,' 'a venal profligate,' 'a wicked slanderer,' and 'an apostate miscreant.' He dwells with much more than the zest of Lavington upon the alleged

impurity of the 'Perfectionists,' describes the followers of Wesley as 'a ragged legion of preaching barbers, cobblers, tinkers, scavengers, draymen, and chimney sweepers;' and declares that 'the sum and substance of John's whole preachment is I, I, I, and my brother, my brother and I have done all the work of God that has been done in these nations.' This pious production is in the form of a letter, and the author concludes it in his usual sanctimonious fashion, 'Yours sincerely for Christ's sake.'[1]

On the other side, it must be admitted that the tone adopted was very different. Wesley himself wrote but little in the controversy, and that little was written with great moderation. The task of supporting the Arminian side was chiefly thrown upon Fletcher, Vicar of Madeley, a Swiss naturalised in England. He was a man of a singularly sweet and gentle disposition, and his many writings against the Calvinists, though not a little tedious to a secular reader, are at least perfect models of controversial amenity maintained under extreme provocation.[2] The Calvinists, however, collected a long string of violent and abusive expressions which the two Wesleys had at an earlier period hurled against their party, and after the death of Toplady they accused Wesley of having publicly asserted that Toplady died blaspheming, and in the horror of despair, and when the gross and glaring falsehood of this assertion was conclusively proved, of having kept a perfect silence, and refused to write a single line either denying the

---

[1] Rowland Hill's *Imposture Detected*. A vast number of similar flowers of rhetoric culled from other productions on the same side will be found in Tyerman's *Life of Wesley*, iii. 255-265.

He has himself made a curious catalogue of the abusive epithets Rowland Hill heaped upon him. See in Fletcher's *Works* 'The Fourth Check to Antinomianism. In Sidney's *Life of Rowland Hill*, there is an edifying collection of the term employed by some of the leaders on the other side (p. 121).

report of what he had said or expressing regret for the calumny which on his authority had been sedulously propagated through the sect.[1]

But with all its divisions and defects the movement was unquestionably effecting a great moral revolution in England. It was essentially a popular movement, exercising its deepest influence over the lower and middle classes. Some of its leaders were men of real genius, but in general the Methodist teacher had little sympathy with the more educated of his fellow-countrymen. To an ordinarily cultivated mind there was something extremely repulsive in his tears and groans and amorous ejaculations, in the coarse anthropomorphic familiarity and the unwavering dogmatism with which he dealt with the most sacred subjects, in the narrowness of his theory of life and his utter insensibility to many of the influences that expand and embellish it, in the mingled credulity and self-confidence with which he imagined that the whole course of nature was altered for his convenience. But the very qualities that impaired his influence in one sphere enhanced it in another. His impassioned prayers and exhortations stirred the hearts of multitudes whom a more decorous teaching had left absolutely callous. The supernatural atmosphere of miracles, judgments, and inspirations, in which he moved, invested the most prosaic life with a halo of romance. The doctrines he taught, the theory of life he enforced, proved themselves capable of arousing in great masses of men an enthusiasm of piety which was hardly surpassed in the first days of Christianity, of eradicating inveterate vice, of fixing and directing impulsive and tempestuous natures that were rapidly

[1] See the particulars of this very grave accusation in the Life prefixed to Toplady's *Works*, i. 122–135. Nothing could be more conclusive than Sir Richard Hill's letter describing the perfect and saintly peace of Toplady's deathbed.

hastening towards the abyss. Out of the profligate slave-dealer, John Newton, Methodism formed one of the purest and most unselfish of saints. It taught criminals in Newgate to mount the gallows in an ecstasy of rapturous devotion.[1] It planted a fervid and enduring religious sentiment in the midst of the most brutal and most neglected portions of the population, and whatever may have been its vices or its defects, it undoubtedly emancipated great numbers from the fear of death, and imparted a warmer tone to the devotion and a greater energy to the philanthropy of every denomination both in England and the colonies.

It is interesting to trace the successive stages of its progress. The colonial work devolved chiefly on Whitefield, who, in his many expeditions to Georgia, revived something of the old spirit of the Pilgrim Fathers. He made, however, no attempt to form a separate community, and the first Methodist society in America was created in 1766 at New York by some Irish emigrants under the direction of a local preacher named Embury. America, Whitefield regarded with a peculiar fondness; he became a fervent advocate of its independence, and he at last left his bones in its soil. The clergy in the colony were far more favourable to the Evangelical preaching than those in England; but, in the perhaps somewhat partial judgment of Wesley, the impression made upon the people was more transient.[2] This judgment, however, was not justified by the event. Methodism in America grew and flourished beyond all its rivals, and it is now the largest religious body in that

[1] See a curious and not altogether edifying account of the saintly demeanour of the criminals going to execution in Newgate, in Wesley's *Journal*, 1748. Horace Walpole has noticed the sympathy of Whitefield for criminals. *Memoirs of George III.* iii. 193.

[2] See a remarkable passage in Wesley's *Journal*, March 1753.

great country, which is destined to be the most important centre of the English race. The great part which the Evangelical party took in abolishing the slave trade will be shown in a future chapter, but on this subject the early Methodists were profoundly divided. Wesley was one of the earliest and strongest opponents of slavery, and the last letter he ever wrote was to Wilberforce encouraging him in his crusade.[1] Whitefield, on the other hand, as strongly advocated slavery. His influence contributed largely to its introduction into Georgia. He purchased for his orphanage in Georgia a plantation which contained at the time of his death no less than seventy-five slaves;[2] both Hervey and Lady Huntingdon sent him donations for the special purpose of purchasing negroes;[3] and Newton, though he afterwards condemned the slave trade, declares that he never 'knew sweeter or more frequent hours of divine communion' than in his last two voyages as a slave-dealer to Guinea.[4] Whitefield, however, devoted himself with praiseworthy energy to the conversion of the negroes, and Methodism speedily acquired that firm hold on the negro mind, which it has never lost. Watts's hymns produced a special enthusiasm among the converted slaves, and the missionaries noted with surprise their fine ear for music, and the ecstatic delight into which it threw them.[5]

In England, as we have seen, the most brutal scenes of violence occurred among the miners of Staffordshire and Cornwall, but their untaught and passionate natures soon felt the attraction of Methodism; and, before the close of his career, Wesley preached to overflowing

---

[1] Tyerman's *Wesley*, iii. 650.

[2] Ibid. ii. 132. Tyerman's *Life of Whitefield*, ii. 169, 205–6, 272.

[3] Tyerman's *Oxford Methodists*, p. 277. *Life of the Countess of Huntingdon*, ii. 264–266.

[4] Cecil's *Life of Newton*, p. 104.

[5] Wesley's *Journal*, 1755, 1756.

multitudes, and amid perfect silence, at Wednesbury, Newcastle, Bolton, Wigan, and St. Ives. Early in the present century a severe censor of the Methodists acknowledged that 'all mines and subterraneous places belonged to them.'[1] In general in England the preachers made least impression in the agricultural districts, and were most favourably received in the seaport towns. Liverpool, especially, welcomed them. Wesley describes it as 'one of the neatest, best built towns in England, full twice as large as Chester,' and likely in another forty years to become almost the equal of Bristol; and he tells us that its inhabitants were distinguished for their courtesy to those who lived among them, whether they were Jews, or Catholics, or Methodists.[2]

In Wales Methodism became completely triumphant, but it triumphed only after a long and fierce struggle, attended with many striking and instructive incidents. In the beginning of the eighteenth century the Principality was in a condition of extreme and general religious languor. Scarcely any of the lower orders could read, and hardly any serious efforts were made to meet the difficulties arising from the language. 'In many churches,' according to the testimony of Howell Harris, 'there was no sermon for months together; in some places nothing but a learned English discourse to an illiterate Welsh congregation.' The gentry very generally abstained from church, and all classes were accustomed to spend Sunday afternoon in wrestling, dancing, playing on the harp, and other amusements equally heinous to a Methodist mind. Wesley pronounced the people to be 'as little versed in the principles of Christianity as a Creek or Cherokee Indian.' They were

[1] Sydney Smith's *Essay on Methodism.*
[2] *Journal*, 1755–1764, 1768.

passionately musical, passionately wedded to tradition, and, like the Highlanders of Scotland, they preserved many relics of Catholicism, and even of Paganism. They crossed themselves in sign of horror; they blessed their beds in the name of the four Evangelists. When a dead man was lowered into the grave, his relations knelt upon its border and prayed that he might soon reach heaven. Many poetic legends were handed down from generation to generation, and were looked upon as almost as sacred as Scripture. Though now the very stronghold of Dissent, Wales was then almost wholly under the dominion of the Church. According to the largest estimate all the Nonconformists together did not form more than one-eighth of the population. In the south, it is true, there were many small congregations, and some zealous ministers, whose names have been carefully preserved, and whose importance has been probably somewhat magnified by the historians of Nonconformity. North Wales was almost wholly Anglican, and in 1735 it contained only ten, according to another account only six, congregations of Dissenters, most of them very small. In Wales, as in other parts of the kingdom, Arminian opinions had made much progress, and a great controversy arose, chiefly among the Nonconformists, between the Arminians and the Calvinists in 1729. In general, however, an extreme doctrinal and religious apathy prevailed, and the general tone of morals appears to have been very lax.

No people, however, from their excitable, and at the same time poetic, temperament, were more fitted for a religious revival than the Welsh, and their evangelists arose from among themselves at a time when the Methodist movement was yet unborn. The first, and perhaps the greatest, of these was Griffith Jones, a clergyman of the Established Church, who was born in 1684, and who received priest's orders in 1709. He

appears to have been a man of the same type as the chief Methodist preachers of the next generation—a man of great popular eloquence, of admirable singleness of purpose, and of a zeal which was far too fiery to respect the discipline of his Church. He preached in the open air, itinerated, denounced fairs and wakes, was repeatedly arraigned before ecclesiastical courts for infractions of canonical discipline, and created a widespread religious excitement throughout the Principality. His special title, however, to the recollection of posterity is the system of 'circulating schools,' which he devised, and which forms one of the very few important steps in religious education that were taken in the empire during the early Hanoverian period. These schools were originated in 1730, and were intended chiefly to dispel the gross religious ignorance that was prevalent among adults by the formation of a body of schoolmasters, who went from village to village teaching the people to read the Bible in Welsh, catechising them and instructing them in psalmody. The funds for their support were chiefly derived from the collections at the sacrament. A seminary was erected for the instruction of the teachers; and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge warmly supported the scheme, which soon attained very considerable dimensions. In ten years, more than 100 schools were established in Wales, and several thousands of scholars were under instruction. Twenty years later, as many as 10,000 scholars were taught in a single year. The schools continued steadily to multiply till 1779, when they were suspended in consequence of a lawsuit about some property, which had been bequeathed to them, and they were not revived till 1809.

Griffith Jones died in 1761. Another, and perhaps a better known Welsh revivalist was Howell Harris, who began to preach about 1736. He was a young,

half-instructed layman, belonging to the Established Church, who had passed in silence through severe religious struggles, and whose fiery nature was at last fully kindled by a few chance words in a sermon by his vicar. He went to Oxford, but left after a single term, wearied, as he said, with 'the irregularities and the wickedness that surrounded him;' and from that time he devoted his whole life to the religious instruction of his countrymen. He was equally without fear and without discretion, and he began, without anyone to support or to encourage him, to itinerate through Wales, preaching the doctrine of justification by faith, the terrors of hell, and the sinfulness of the national amusements. He preached without any premeditation, usually three or four, sometimes five or six times a day. A letter from Whitefield, in 1738, warmly encouraged him, and he afterwards acted in full harmony with the Methodists. He seems to have given great provocation, and he certainly met with extreme hostility. He made it his special mission to inveigh against public amusements, and on one occasion during the races at Monmouth, when the ladies and gentlemen of the county were dining together in the town hall under the presidency of a Duke, Howell Harris mounted a table, which was placed against the window of the room where they were assembled, and poured forth a fierce denunciation of the sinfulness of his auditors. The people and clergy were furious against him. I have already noticed how Seward, who was one of his companions, was killed by the mob. On one occasion a pistol was fired at Howell Harris. On another, he was beaten almost to death; again and again he was stoned, with such fury that his escape appeared all but miraculous. He was repeatedly denounced from the pulpit. One clergyman was seen distributing intoxicating liquors among the mob in order to excite them. An-

other, who held no less a position than that of Chancellor of the diocese of Bangor, stirred up whole districts against him. Women in his congregation were stripped naked. Men were seized by the press-gang, and some of his coadjutors had to fly for their lives. But if he met with great opposition, Harris met also with passionate adherents. He preached everywhere to immense crowds, and created in most parts of Wales religious societies, like those which had been founded so abundantly in England at the time of the Revolution. Public diversions were suspended, the churches crowded, and family prayers, after a long desuetude, renewed. Though repeatedly refused ordination in the Church of England, he always remained attached to it, and towards the close of his career he made special efforts to draw the Nonconformists into its pale. In 1759, when there was a fear of invasion, he joined the Breconshire Militia, and afterwards preached much in regimentals.

Both Whitefield and Wesley passed frequently through Wales and preached with great effect, but they had naturally less influence than those who could address the people in their native tongue. It was in Wales that Lady Huntingdon established her missionary college, and the Calvinistic type of Methodism took the deepest root in the Principality. In 1742, Howell Harris wrote to Whitefield that there were then to his knowledge ten 'awakened' clergymen, and the number rapidly multiplied. Among others a curate of the Establishment, named Daniel Rowlands, who had begun his career almost at the same time as Howell Harris, obtained an extraordinary popularity and influence; he is said to have sometimes administered the sacrament on a single occasion to more than 2,000 communicants, and the folly of the Bishop of St. David's in withdrawing from him his licence on account

of his itinerancy, was one of the causes that contributed most powerfully to precipitate Wales into Nonconformity.[1] The excitable Welsh natures were often thrown by the new style of preaching into the wildest delirium. Strong men screamed and fainted under the preaching of Howell Harris. Rowlands, on one occasion, preached for no less than six hours without intermission to a spell-bound multitude. A sermon of a preacher named Morris, on the last judgment, is said to have created such a panic that numbers rushed wildly through the streets, imagining that the last day had arrived.[2] But the most curious form which this fanaticism assumed was the sect of the Jumpers, who were accustomed to work themselves into a kind of religious madness and bound to and fro for hours during divine worship.

The change which was effected by the Methodist and Evangelical preaching in Wales had ultimately the very important effect of detaching the vast majority of the population from the Established Church. The Dissenters from the beginning welcomed, while the bulk of the clergy opposed, the new doctrines, and the advance of Nonconformity was, in consequence, steady and rapid. The complete severance of the Calvinistic Methodists from the Church took place in 1811, and the number of Nonconformist congregations in Wales, which in 1742 was only 105, amounted in 1861 to 2,927.[3]

---

[1] See the interesting sketch of Rowlands' life, in Ryle's *Christian Leaders of the Last Century*. Many statistics of the progress of Welsh Nonconformity are collected in Rees' *Nonconformity in Wales*.

[2] Rees' *Hist. of Nonconformity in Wales*, p. 417.

[3] See Rees' *Hist. of Nonconformity in Wales*. The Autobiography of Howell Harris (reprinted in Jackson's *Christian Biographies*). Lady Huntingdon's *Memoirs*. The Life of Griffith Jones in Middleton's *Biographia Evangelica*. Philip's *Life of Whitefield*, pp. 111–132. Sidney's *Life of Rowland Hill*, pp. 115–117.

In Scotland the Methodist movement was much less important than in other parts of the island. It had not there to dispel the same ignorance or the same apathy, and it found a people accustomed to a higher standard of dogmatic preaching than in England. Whitefield first visited Scotland in 1741, at the invitation of Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine, the two leaders of the Associate Presbytery, and they hoped that he would confine his exertions solely to their small schismatic body. Whitefield, however, whose one object was to teach what he believed to be the truth to all who would hear him, speedily quarrelled with the Erskines. They found that he was very indifferent to that 'Solemn League and Covenant' which they esteemed the most valuable of human documents, and to that question of Church patronage which they regarded as transcendently important; and they saw with indignation that his preaching in connection with the ministers of the Establishment tended rather to strengthen than to weaken the body from which they had seceded. Their indignation knew no bounds. The language of grave, sanctimonious flattery, the professions of a more than worldly affection, were at once changed for a torrent of the fiercest abuse. The conduct of the English missionary was pronounced scandalous, and his success diabolical. He was represented as 'roaming about far and near, casting forth floods of doctrine calculated for transmitting devils into the hearts of men.' A public fast was appointed in atonement for 'the fond reception given to Mr. George Whitefield, notwithstanding it is notoriously known that he has sworn the Oath of Supremacy, abjured the Solemn League and Covenant, and endeavours by his lax toleration principles to pull down the hedges of government and discipline which the Lord hath planted about His vineyard in this land;' and a 'Declaration, Protestation, and Testimony of the

suffering remnant of the anti-Popish, anti-Lutheran, anti-Prelatic, anti-Whitefieldian, anti-Erastian, anti-Sectarian true Presbyterian Church of Scotland,' was issued, in which all the epithets of theological vituperation were hurled upon Whitefield, and upon the 'diabolical delusion' that led so many to crowd to his sermons.[1] Whitefield met the storm with an admirable good humour, and was not betrayed into a single offensive expression. His preaching at Cambuslang produced a great revival, accompanied by all the hysterical phenomena that were so common in England, and at a later period his preaching at Edinburgh is said to have had a considerable influence in checking the growth of the 'Moderate' party, whose large and tolerant views were gradually mitigating that narrow-minded and ignorant fanaticism which had made the Scotch Kirk notorious in Europe.[2] But on the whole Methodism took no deep root in Scotland. As might have been expected from his Calvinism, Whitefield was more successful than Wesley. In his excursions to Scotland, Wesley, indeed, was everywhere received with a decorum, a courtesy, and a propriety that he rarely found in England or Wales, but no extraordinary consequences followed his preaching, and he complained bitterly of the coldness and insensibility of the people.[3] Sir Walter Scott, when still a boy, heard him preach in Scotland, and he observes that his style was too colloquial for the Scotch taste.

Ireland, on the other hand, he found a soil pre-eminently suited for his seed. There were riots, it is true, in Cork and Kilkenny, and in the former town the magistrates showed themselves bitterly hostile to

[1] See the very curious collection of documents in Tyerman's *Life of Whitefield*, i. 509–514; ii. 10, 11.

[2] Philip's *Life of Whitefield*, p. 249.

[3] *Journal*, 1755, 1757.

the Methodists; a Methodist chapel was wrecked in Dublin, and Joseph Healy, one of Wesley's itinerants, was nearly killed at Athlone; but for the most part Wesley met with little real opposition during his many journeys through that country, and he has left the most emphatic testimony to the manner in which he was received. 'The people in general,' he said, 'are of a more teachable spirit than in most parts of England.' 'So civil a people as the Irish I never saw, either in Europe or America.' 'If my brother and I could have been here [at Dublin] for a few months, I question if there might not have been a larger society here than even in London.' 'So general a drawing I have never known among any people, so that as yet none even seems to oppose the truth.' 'What a nation is this! Every man, woman, and child (except a few of the great vulgar) not only patiently but gladly suffer the word of exhortation.' 'I have not seen in all the world a people so easy to be persuaded as the Irish.'[1] During many successive years he preached in the streets and public market-places to vast and sympathising congregations, consisting chiefly of Catholics, who thronged to hear him, in spite of the opposition of the priests. But while speaking very warmly of the amiable qualities of the Irish people, he lamented the carelessness and instability of the national character and the religious ignorance prevailing among them, and he complained that the condition of the societies fluctuated violently from year to year. The opinion of so great a master of the art of government concerning the proper method of ruling Ireland is well worthy of quotation. 'Nothing is wanted here but a rigorous discipline, which is more needful in this than in any other nation, the people in general being so soft and delicate that the least slackness utterly destroys them.'[2]

[1] *Journal*, 1747, 1748, 1759, 1769. [2] Ibid. 1758.

Wesley passed through most parts of Ireland at a time when the Whiteboy outrages were at their height, but yet his sympathies remained strongly in favour of the lower classes. 'The poor in Ireland,' he wrote, 'in general are well behaved; all the ill-breeding is among well-dressed people.'[1] He speaks on one occasion of some boisterous young officers as the 'only wild Irish' he had encountered, and he censures in strong terms the conduct of 'the gentry, who are continually driving away hundreds, yea thousands, of those that remain, by throwing such quantities of arable land into pasture, which leaves them neither business nor food.'[2] The foreign element was still very distinct. Wesley more than once attended the French service at Portarlington, there being still no English service in that town,[3] and he mentions the surprise of the French prisoners at finding in Dublin as good French spoken as they could have heard in Paris.[4] To the south of Limerick he found four villages still inhabited by the children of the German Palatines, who came over under Queen Anne. Having no minister among them, they had sunk into complete religious lethargy; but a revival took place under the preaching of the new evangelists, and the sobriety, honesty, and devotion of the German colonists distinguished them greatly from the wild population around them. A few years later Wesley found them rapidly dwindling, the exactions and tyranny of their landlords making it impossible for them, with all their diligence and frugality, to obtain the common necessaries of life. Some went to America, others were scattered up and down the kingdom, and only a small remnant remained in their old homes.[5]

Protestantism, he noticed, was making little or no

[1] *Journal*, 1785.
[2] Ibid. 1760.
[3] Ibid. 1750.
[4] Ibid. 1756, 1758, 1765.
[5] Ibid. 1760, 1765, 1767.

progress. 'At least ninety-nine in a hundred of the native Irish remain in the religion of their forefathers. The Protestants, whether in Dublin or elsewhere, are almost all transplanted lately from England; nor is it any wonder that those who are born Papists generally live and die such, when the Protestants can find no better ways to convert them than penal laws and Acts of Parliament.'[1] His journals can hardly, however, be said to give a very unfavourable picture of the clergy of the Establishment in Ireland. He repeatedly chronicles the impressive sermons he had heard in the parish churches, commends the efforts of the Archbishop of Dublin to spread religious books among the poor of Dublin, and acknowledges the sympathy he had met with from more than one bishop. He notices the prevailing custom of beginning the morning service at midday when the morning had terminated, and also the scandalous neglect into which Irish churchyards were suffered to fall, and, like most modern travellers, he was impressed with the marked contrast in material civilisation between Ulster and the rest of the country, and with the opulence and architectural beauty of Belfast, which was then a town of about 30,000 inhabitants.

In several cases he met with bitter opposition from the clergy of the Established Church, but on the whole that opposition appears to have been less general than in England, and Wesley severely censures the tendency of his own followers in Ireland towards Dissent, and the invectives of Methodist preachers against the clergy of the Establishment. But though a Dissenting body which now numbers nearly 50,000 souls was created, the most important work of the Methodist revival in Ireland was its indirect influence on the Protestant

[1] *Journal*, 1747.

Episcopalians. That influence, it is true, was not very seriously felt till after the death of Wesley.[1] The Irish Church in the last years of the eighteenth century was singularly tolerant and undogmatic, and it was only in the early years of the nineteenth century that the Evangelical teaching acquired an ascendency. Political causes, which had revived the waning antagonism between Protestants and Catholics, predisposed the former in favour of a theology which was intensely anti-Catholic; and the Irish Establishment became by far the most Evangelical section of the Anglican Church. In Ireland, as elsewhere, the Evangelical movement produced many forms of charity, many holy lives, and many peaceful and triumphant deaths, but its general effects were, I think, very mixed. Stimulating the spirit of proselytism and deepening religious animosities, it added greatly to the social and political divisions of the nation, and its intellectual influence on the Protestants was extremely prejudicial. The popular preacher became the intellectual ideal, and the weakest form of religious literature almost the sole reading of large classes. Serious study and temperate and impartial thinking were discouraged, and a taste for empty and tawdry declamation, for false sentiment, and for confident and unsupported assertion, was proportionately increased.

The Evangelical movement not only spread over the surface of the Empire; it also more or less permeated every section of society. The school at Kingswood was not a hopeful experiment, but Methodism had ultimately a deep influence on the education of the young. Rowland Hill wrote hymns for children, which Cowper revised, and in the latter years of the eighteenth

[1] A great deal of information about the early history of the Evangelical movement in Ireland will be found in the *Life of the Countess of Huntingdon*.

century the followers of Wesley bore a distinguished part in the great movement for the establishment of Sunday-schools. The Methodists appear to have preached especially to children, on whose sensitive nerves their highly coloured sermons often exercised a terrible influence. Many were thrown into convulsive paroxysms of agony; many others died in ecstasies of devotion; and Wesley speaks of great numbers 'between the ages of six and fourteen' who were deeply affected with religion, and whose piety had no small influence upon their parents. Having described, among other cases, a remarkable revival among children at Stockton-upon-Tees in 1784, he adds: 'Is not this a new thing in the earth? God begins His work in children. Thus it has been also in Cornwall, Manchester, and Epworth. Thus the flame spreads to those of riper years.'[1]

Methodism also gradually acquired many disciples in the army. Whitefield himself, in 1745, preached at Boston to the colonial troops, who were about to set out for the expedition against Louisburg, and the malevolence with which the press-gangs singled out itinerant Methodists as their special victims scattered the seeds of religious revival through the regular forces.[2] It may be first traced in the army of Flanders in 1744, the year of the battle of Dettingen, when a small society, numbering at first three, then twelve, and soon after more than 200 persons, was formed among the regiments at Ghent, and Wesley has preserved several letters from the soldiers, which throw a novel and attractive light over the campaign. One soldier was accustomed to preach in the open air, near the camp at Ask. His congregation often numbered more than

---

[1] *Journal*, 1784.
[2] Tyerman's *Life of Whitefield*, ii. 106, 150.

1,000; many of the officers attended, and he sometimes preached thirty-five times in seven days. The society had its stated hours of meeting, and commonly two whole nights in every week were passed in devotion; two small tabernacles were built in the camp, near Brussels, and rooms were hired at Bruges and at Ghent. One of the leading Methodists dated his conversion from the battle of Dettingen, when the balls were raining around him, and he ended his career at Fontenoy, where he was seen by one of his companions laid across a cannon, both his legs having been taken off by a chain-shot, praising God and exhorting those about him with his last breath.[1] It was in order to meet the wants of this class of converts that the Methodists established their first Bible society, 'the Naval and Military.'

Among the students of the universities the same spirit appeared. Oxford, though it had been the cradle, was the most virulent opponent of Methodism. In 1740, a student named Graves was compelled, in order to obtain his testimonial, to sign a paper formally renouncing 'the modern practice and principles of the persons commonly called Methodists.'[2] In 1757 Romaine was excluded from the university pulpit for having preached two sermons containing what would now be called the Evangelical commonplaces about justification by faith and the imperfection of our best works. In 1768 the Vice-Chancellor expelled six Methodist students from St. Edmund's Hall. Three of them, it is true, were uneducated tradesmen, who had come to the university for the purpose of qualifying for holy orders, and who were pronounced to be still 'wholly illiterate and incapable of doing the statutable

[1] Wesley's *Journal*, 1744, 1745, 1746. *Life of the Countess of Huntingdon*, i. 93, 94.

[2] See Wedgwood's *Wesley*, p. 293. Wesley's *Journal*, 1742.

exercises of the Hall, but it is more than doubtful whether their ignorance would have led to their expulsion if it had not been connected with strong Evangelical principles. The other three cases were especially scandalous. There was no evidence that the students were idle, incompetent, or insubordinate. They had taken part in prayer-meetings in private houses or barns, but had immediately desisted from this practice on being informed that it was displeasing to those in authority, had promised to abstain from them for the future, and had actually done so for several months before their expulsion. They were expelled from the university, and their prospects in life seriously impaired, chiefly because they had taken part in these meetings, which the authorities pronounced to be illegal conventicles, and because they professed the doctrines 'that faith without works is the sole condition of justification; that there is no necessity for works; that the immediate impulse of the Spirit is to be waited for; that the Spirit of God works irresistibly, and that once a child of God is always a child of God.' They carefully guarded these doctrines in their explanations from every tendency towards Antinomianism, and they were expelled at a time when the discipline of the university had sunk to the very lowest point, and when blasphemy, gambling, and drunkenness were treated as the most venial offences.[1] Among the expelled students was Erasmus Middleton, afterwards the well-known author of the 'Biographia Evangelica.'

The conduct of the university authorities at Cambridge, under far greater provocation, was very different. In 1766 a group of Cambridge students embraced the new opinions in their most aggressive form. Their

[1] See Sir Richard Hill's *Pietas Oxoniensis*, and Dr. Nowell's (the Vice-Chancellor) answer to it. See, too, Sidney's *Life of Rowland Hill*, pp. 48-52.

leader was the well-known Rowland Hill, a young man of good family, of considerable abilities, and of indomitable zeal, but of the most turbulent and eccentric disposition. Not content with diffusing his doctrines among the students, and visiting the prisoners in the gaol and the sick in the town, he began, while still an undergraduate, to preach in the streets of Cambridge and in the adjoining villages. The novelty of the spectacle attracted much notice, and mobs were collected and riots began. Such proceedings were severely condemned by the authorities of the university; they were entirely incompatible with the maintenance of college discipline, and they were the more censurable because the parents of Rowland Hill pronounced in the most emphatic manner their disapprobation of his proceedings. He was, however, extremely insubordinate, and both Whitefield and Berridge encouraged him to defy the wishes of his parents and the university statutes and authorities which he had promised to obey. Under the circumstances a severe sentence would have been amply justified. The authorities of the university acted, however, as Rowland Hill was afterwards compelled to confess, with signal moderation. Whether it be through respect for his conscientious motives, through fear of scandal, or through regard to the position of his family, they carefully abstained from pushing matters to extremities, and at last consented to leave him unmolested as long as he abstained from disturbing the town by public conventicles or teaching any doctrine contrary to the Thirty-nine Articles.[1] His proceedings, however, were so irregular, and his character was so unruly, that no less than six bishops refused to ordain him, and he ultimately set up a chapel unconnected with any special religious denomination. Eighteen years later he was

[1] Sidney's *Life of Rowland Hill.*

gratified by seeing Cambridge one of the great centres of Evangelical teaching. Among its prominent members were three Evangelicals of the most ardent type—Jowett, once well known as a devotional writer; Milner, afterwards Dean of Carlisle, and brother of the ecclesiastical historian; and Simeon, who for many years exercised an extraordinary influence at Cambridge, and who devoted a large fortune to purchasing advowsons in important towns, to be held by the members of his party.[1]

We may trace, too, the widening circle of the movement in general literature. As might easily have been expected, it at first seldom found favour with cultivated minds, and the many absurdities and superstitions that accompanied it laid it open to great ridicule. Pope satirised Whitefield in the 'Dunciad;' Anstey ridiculed Methodism in 'The New Bath Guide;' Foote retorted the Methodist invectives against the drama by bringing the sect prominently on the stage. In Fielding and Smollett the Methodist is represented as a canting hypocrite.[2] In Horace Walpole he is a combination of a knave, a fanatic, and a Papist. Junius speaks of his 'whining piety,' and Dr. Johnson, though admitting that Whitefield had done good among the poor, describes his preaching as only noise and fury, and compares his popularity to that of a mountebank. But Methodism, or at least that Evangelical movement which grew out of it, soon left a deep impress upon the literature of its time. Cowper, the greatest English poet of the closing years of the eighteenth century, devoted his graceful and tender genius mainly to its service. It contributed powerfully to the popularity of

[1] See a letter from Venn in Sidney's *Life of Rowland Hill*, pp. 173, 174.

[2] See *Joseph Andrews*, bk. i. ch. xvii.; *Amelia*, bk. i. chaps. iv. and v.; and the picture of the Methodist footman in *Humphrey Clinker*.

the 'Night Thoughts' of Young; and it appeared prominently in the 'Fool of Quality' of Henry Brooke, and in all the writings of Hervey and of Hannah More. Its special literature has now probably few readers among the highly educated classes, and has scarcely obtained an adequate recognition in literary history. The 'Ecclesiastical History' of Milner, and the 'Biblical Commentaries' of Scott, are perhaps its most conspicuous monuments, but there was also a vast literature of purely devotional works which have awakened an echo in the hearts of thousands. The 'Cardiphonia' of Newton, the 'Life of Faith' of Romaine, the 'Force of Truth' of Scott, the 'Devout Exercises' of Jay, the 'Village Dialogues' of Rowland Hill, 'The Complete Duty of Man' by Venn, the 'Olney Hymns,' the 'Practical View' of Wilberforce, as well as innumerable sermons and religious biographies emanating from the same school, have exercised a deep and lasting influence upon the character and opinions of large sections of the English people. During the last years of the eighteenth century, and during the first decade of the nineteenth century, the overwhelming majority of the books which in England acquired a great and general popularity in the religious world, were deeply impregnated with the Evangelical theology. In hymns the movement was especially rich. Both of the Wesleys, as well as Newton, Berridge, Shirley, and Rowland Hill, were hymn-writers. Both Madan and Gambold sometimes showed traces of a high order of poetry, and Toplady has left two or three of the most beautiful hymns in the language. Owing, perhaps, to the remarkable musical talent of the Wesley family, the Puritanical feeling so conspicuous in Methodism never extended to music. Some of Handel's oratorios were performed in Methodist chapels. The singing and organ in Surrey Chapel, where Rowland Hill officiated, were famous for their

beauty, and the great composer Giardini supplied tunes for some of the Methodist hymns.[1]

The progress of Evangelical opinions among the higher orders, though perhaps less sincere, and certainly less lasting, than among the poor, was also considerable. The success in this sphere was chiefly due to the Countess of Huntingdon. This very remarkable woman, who united no small mental powers with a most ardent and somewhat imperious character, was one of the members of the original Methodist society in Fetter Lane, and she devoted her whole life, and, after the death of her husband in 1746, her whole fortune, to organising the Calvinistic section of the Methodists. Her college at Trevecca was founded in 1768, and it sent forth missionaries to every part of the United Kingdom. Romaine and Whitefield were successively her chaplains. Her drawing-room in London was continually opened for Methodist preaching, and Whitefield there addressed brilliant but very incongruous assemblies, drawn from the fashionable world. Among his hearers we find Chesterfield and Bolingbroke. Chesterfield paid him a courtly compliment, and is said to have been deeply moved by his preaching. Bolingbroke assured him, in his stately manner, that 'he had done great justice to the divine attributes in his discourse;' and we afterwards find the old sceptical statesman perusing the works of Calvin, and expressing his warm admiration for his philosophy.[2] Among the occasional hearers at Lady Huntingdon's assemblies was the old

---

[1] *Life of the Countess of Huntingdon*, i. 230. Tyerman's *Wesley*, ii. 499, 500. Newton, it is true, preached an impressive sermon on the profanity of treating the solemn words of the Passion merely as the subject of a musical spectacle. Cecil's *Life of Newton*, pp. 188–191. See, too, Cowper's *Task*, bk. vi.

[2] This rests on the authority of Lady Huntingdon herself. See the curious anecdote in Toplady's *Works*, iv. 101.

Duchess of Marlborough. Lady Suffolk, the mistress of George II., attended once, but was bitterly offended because Whitefield, who was ignorant of her presence, introduced a passage into his sermon which she construed as an attack upon herself. The brilliant and eccentric Lady Townshend for a time coquetted with Methodism as well as with Popery. The haughty Duchess of Buckingham consented to hear Whitefield, but expressed her opinion of his doctrines in a letter to Lady Huntingdon, which is amusingly characteristic both of the writer and of her time: 'I thank your ladyship,' she wrote, 'for the information concerning the Methodist preachers. Their doctrines are most repulsive and strongly tinctured with impertinence and disrespect towards their superiors, in perpetually endeavouring to level all ranks and do away with all distinctions. It is monstrous to be told that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl the earth. This is highly offensive and insulting, and I cannot but wonder that your ladyship should relish any sentiments so much at variance with high rank and good breeding.'[1]

Several ladies and a few men of great position were deeply impressed with the new teaching. As early as 1741 Lady Mary Hastings, the sister-in-law of Lady Huntingdon, startled the fashionable world in London by her marriage with an itinerant Yorkshire preacher named Ingham. The half-brother of Bolingbroke was a sincere convert. Chesterfield and Horace Walpole have spoken in strong terms of the extreme avarice of Lord Bath, the old rival of Walpole, but he subscribed liberally to the orphanage at Georgia, and he was a frequent, and apparently devout, attendant at Whitefield's Chapel in Tottenham Court Road.[2] Lady Chesterfield,

[1] *Life of the Countess of Huntingdon.*

[2] Ibid. Bishop Newton in his Autobiography (*Works*, i. 51)

Lady Fanny Shirley, Lady Glenorchy, Lady Betty Germain, and Lady Dartmouth, were ardent Evangelicals. Lord Dartmouth, who took a conspicuous but very unfortunate part during the American war, was fervently attached to the sect, and his piety has been commemorated by Cowper in a well-known line.[1] The Evangelical party also reckoned among its early members Sir C. Middleton, afterwards Lord Barham, who was First Lord of the Admiralty during the brilliant period of the triumphs of Nelson; Lord Buchan, the brother of the illustrious Erskine; and the rich merchant John Thornton, who expended an ample fortune in the most splendid charity, and who preceded Simeon in the practice of purchasing advowsons and bestowing them on Evangelical preachers.[2]

By the exertions of all these patrons, Methodism for a time became almost fashionable. 'If you ever think of returning to England,' wrote Horace Walpole to Sir Horace Mann, 'as I hope it will be long first, you must prepare yourself with Methodism. I really believe by that time it will be necessary; this sect increases as fast as almost ever any religious nonsense did.'[3] Lady Fanny Shirley opened her drawing-rooms for preaching in London, and Evangelical opinions gradually spread to the fashionable watering-places. Wesley had repeatedly preached at Bath, and complained bitterly of the dull and worldly character of his congregations and of the little impression he made, but the social position of Lady Huntingdon at once introduced Methodism into Bath society. A chapel was erected, and Shirley, Venn,

also mentions the large charities of Bath. See, too, Pennington's Life of Mrs. Carter, p. 163.

[1] 'We boast some rich ones whom the Gospel sways,
And one who wears a coronet and prays.'—Cowper's *Truth*.

[2] *Life of the Countess of Huntingdon*.

[3] To Sir H. Mann (May 3, 1749).

and Jay made many converts. Horace Walpole once visited this chapel when Wesley was preaching, and noticed its 'true Gothic windows,' and the 'boys and girls with charming voices that sing hymns in parts.'[1] Cheltenham, which was just rising into a great watering-place, became in time one of the most Evangelical towns in the kingdom. Lady Dartmouth opened her drawing-room there for preaching, but no chapel was erected till that founded by Rowland Hill in 1808. At Tunbridge Wells occasional preachings were held in the house of Sir Thomas I'Anson. A mission, under the immediate auspices of Lady Huntingdon, took place in 1763, and a chapel was opened in 1768. The eminently religious character of George III. favoured the movement in society; and the young King, though generally very inimical to everything approaching to Dissent, more than once spoke with warm admiration of the Methodists.

But the most important sphere of Evangelical progress was the Church of England. In 1738, at the beginning of the Methodist movement, Wesley observed, in a letter to Peter Böhler, that he knew ten clergymen in England who preached what he believed to be Evangelical doctrine. We have already seen how bitterly the majority of the English clergy at first opposed the movement, and we have seen, too, I think, that their opposition was not unnatural or altogether unwarrantable. Few things could be more irritating to a parochial clergyman than the Methodist preacher who invaded his parish, denounced him before his congregation as a Pharisee or a heathen, threw great numbers into convulsive paroxysms which he pretended to be supernatural, and never failed to leave behind him a long ground-swell of agitation. It is not surprising that High Church clergymen, filled with rigid notions about Church discipline, should have inveighed bitterly against

[1] To Mr. Chute (Oct. 10, 1766).

proceedings that were so scandalously irregular, that wise and moderate men should have revolted against a preaching which produced so much fanaticism and so much misery, that young curates fresh from the boisterous life of the university or the public school should have been only too ready to encourage the riotous dispositions of their parishioners. Wesley, during almost the whole of his career, adopted a language that was studiously moderate and decorous; but Whitefield, as he himself assures us, in his early days 'thought he had never well closed a sermon without a lash at the fat, downy doctors of the Establishment,' and the coarse and virulent opposition of many of the lay preachers to the clergy was a perpetual subject of complaint. The seed, however, which was so abundantly cast abroad, germinated largely among the clergy. In 1764, when Wesley attempted to form an union of Evangelical clergymen, he addressed circulars to about fifty;[1] the number continually and rapidly increased,[2] and before the close of his career the violence of the opposition to him had almost ceased. His last journals are full of the most emphatic statements of the change that had occurred. The physical phenomena that had once so largely accompanied Methodist preaching had become very rare, and the great moral benefits that resulted from it were fully recognised. In 1777 Wesley had begun to ask, 'Is the offence of the cross ceased? It seems, after being scandalous near fifty years, I am at length growing into an honourable man.'[3] Two or three years later he found himself overwhelmed with invitations to preach in the pulpits of the Established

[1] Tyerman's *Wesley*, ii. 509.

[2] It is said that when Romaine first began to preach Evangelical doctrines he could only reckon up six or seven Evangelical clergymen. Before he died there were above 500 whom he regarded as such. Preface to Venn's *Life*, p. xiv.

[3] *Journal.*

Church.[1] The extraordinary power of Whitefield naturally produced a school of imitators, and as early as 1756 an essayist complained bitterly that 'a wild and intemperate delivery,' copied from the orators of the Foundery and Tabernacle at Moorfields, had become common in the parish churches.[2] The Evangelical doctrines, which for some generations had been almost excluded from Anglican pulpits, became once more commonplaces; and by the close of the century the Evangelical party, though still a minority, had become a large and important section of the English Church.

From the group of clergymen who most successfully co-operated with Wesley in effecting this great change a few names may be cited. The itinerant movement in the Church of England was chiefly represented by Berridge and Grimshaw. The first of these was Rector of Everton, in Bedfordshire. The son of a prosperous Nottingham grazier, he was sent to Cambridge, where he distinguished himself by his industry, became a Fellow of Clare Hall, and was presented to a living in the gift of his college. He was eccentric almost to insanity, born, as he himself said, with a fool's cap on his head, and accustomed to fill his letters, and sometimes his sermons, and even his prayers, with a strain of coarse and childish jesting. He wrote many hymns in doggerel verse and sometimes of a grotesque absurdity, and although the members of his party were accustomed to speak of him as a man of great natural genius, it would be impossible to find among his scanty remains a single page of real eloquence or a single thought of real originality. He brought, however, to the work of evangelising, an intense and a passionate earnestness,

[1] Tyerman, iii. 326, 390.

[2] *The Connoisseur*, No. 126. Newton said of Whitefield: 'He was the original of popular preaching, and all our popular ministers are only his copies.' *Life of the Countess of Huntingdon*, i. 92.

an unlimited supply of homely images, and occasionally a pithy humour, not altogether unlike that of Fuller.[1] The eccentricities of his style and the vehemence of his manner attracted thousands, and under his preaching great numbers underwent the physical distortions I have described. Madan and Romaine, at the request of Lady Huntingdon, went down to Everton to witness them, and came to the conclusion that they were decidedly supernatural. The squire, who 'did not like strangers, and hated to be incommoded,' complained bitterly of the throngs that were attracted by this strange preaching to his quiet church. The zeal of Berridge, however, speedily outleaped the boundaries of his parish. He habitually traversed all Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, and Huntingdonshire, and many parts of Hertfordshire, Essex, and Suffolk. His activity was truly amazing. 'For twenty-four years,' wrote one of his biographers, 'he continued to ride nearly 100 miles and to preach some ten or twelve sermons every week.' His whole fortune was expended in charity or in supporting lay preachers. The neighbouring clergymen, whose parishes he invaded and whose churches he emptied, repeatedly complained to the bishop, who frequently but vainly directed him to confine his preaching to the ordinary hours, to consecrated buildings, and to his own parish. Berridge answered that other clergymen were unmolested when they visited the bowling-grounds outside their own parishes, that whatever canon he might break he dared not break that which said 'Preach the gospel to every creature,' that he preached only at two times, in season and out of season. He began life as a violent Arminian, but

[1] E.g. 'Jonah's whale will teach a good lesson as well as Pisgah's top, and a man may sometimes learn as much from being a night and day in the deep as from being forty days on the mount.'

afterwards identified himself completely with the Calvinistic Methodists, and in each stage of his career he abused frantically the party opposed to him. He had several powerful protectors, and probably owed something of his impunity to the firm friendship of Lady Huntingdon and of Thornton. One of his friends was on intimate terms with the elder Pitt, and that statesman is said on one occasion to have indirectly interposed to shield him from a prosecution. With all his eccentricities, and partly, perhaps, in consequence of them, Berridge made a deep and abiding impression over the large district which he traversed, and he appears to have been in a great degree the master and model of Rowland Hill. He remained unmarried, partly in order that he might devote his undivided energies to field-preaching, and partly because having opened his Bible at random, in order to learn, as he expressed it, 'whether he should take a Jezebel,' his eyes lighted on texts unpropitious to matrimony.[1] He died at a great age, in 1793, and before his death, his mind, which was never very sane, appears to have been thoroughly disordered.[2]

Grimshaw was another example of an eccentric and irregular nature entirely dominated by religious zeal. He was born at Brindle, in Lancashire, in 1708, and having passed through Christ's College, Cambridge, he was ordained in 1731, and was for the next three years a clergyman of the ordinary eighteenth-century type: hunting, fishing, and playing cards without scruple,

[1] He says that on one occasion when he was in this state of perplexity, a lady came to him and told him it had been revealed to her that she was to be his wife. He answered, with some shrewdness, 'In that case it would have been revealed to me that I was to be your husband.'

[2] See the Memoir prefixed to Berridge's *Works* (ed. 1864), and many curious particulars in Lady Huntingdon's *Memoirs*. See, too, Venn's *Life*, pp. 500, 501. There is a good sketch of Berridge in Ryle's *Christian Leaders*.

occasionally indulging in some convivial excesses, but in general discharging the ordinary clerical duties with respectable decorum. Religious impressions, however, made in childhood at last revived, and they were probably strengthened by the death of his wife, which destroyed the happiness of his home. For several years he continued in a morbid state of religious despondency. He imagined that he was damned, he was besieged by blasphemous thoughts, he was haunted by the dread of suicide. He abandoned every form of amusement. He persuaded himself that two distinct and vivid flashes of light proceeding from some pewter dishes directed his eye to a work of Owen on 'Justification by Faith.' On one occasion, as he afterwards related, when officiating in church, he was seized with a sudden dizziness, which prevented him from proceeding, his arms and legs grew cold as death, and he then passed into a strange trance. He found himself in a dark, narrow passage, divided by a wall from hell, and he heard above him God the Father and God the Son disputing about his fate. The former strenuously urged that he should be damned, as he had not yet relinquished his own righteousness. The latter took the opposite side, and at last thrust down into view His hands and His feet, and Grimshaw observed that the nail-holes were ragged and blue, and streaming with fresh blood. From this moment he revived, and ever after found perfect peace in the conviction of the utter worthlessness of all human works, and the complete and gratuitous salvation achieved by Christ.

His first scenes of labour were Rochdale and the neighbouring village of Todmorden, and he was afterwards appointed perpetual curate of Haworth, a village in one of the most secluded districts of Yorkshire, which in our own century has acquired in the eyes of thousands a deep interest as the home of the Brontës,

and the scene from which they derived some of the happiest touches of their inspiration. From this centre Grimshaw spread the Evangelical doctrines over the greater part of Yorkshire and of the adjoining counties. The soil was not altogether a virgin one, for a few years before his arrival, Ingham, who had been one of the original Oxford Methodists, and one of the companions of Wesley in Georgia, and Nelson, a Yorkshire stonemason, who was one of the most zealous of Wesley's lay preachers, had been itinerating through the county; but their success was marred by a violent quarrel which broke out between them on the subject of the Moravians. The influence of Grimshaw was far wider, and his extraordinary zeal, as well as his repudiation of all pulpit conventionalities, and his habitual use of what he called 'market English,' gave him unrivalled power with the poor. He acquired—apparently with much justice—the nickname of 'the mad parson,' and many characteristic anecdotes of his proceedings are preserved. During the hymn before the sermon he was accustomed to issue from the church, and drive—sometimes, it is said, with a horsewhip—all the loiterers in the village into the sacred precincts. On one occasion he pretended to be a mischievous boy, and teased a blind woman with a stick, in order to ascertain whether she had attained a complete command of her temper and her tongue. On another he tested the charity of an ostentatious professor of religion by appearing in the garb of a beggar at his door; on a third he attired himself as an old woman, and took his stand near the door of a cottage prayer-meeting, which was frequently interrupted by some boys, in order that he might detect the offenders. In his parish he established so severe a despotism that a man riding on an urgent mission of charity on Sunday could not induce the blacksmith to shoe his horse till he had obtained the minister's per-

mission; and drinkers in the public-house are said to have taken flight through the window when Grimshaw appeared in the street. He was peculiarly anxious to prevent his parishioners from walking in the fields on Sunday, and went himself in disguise to the place where they were accustomed to meet, in order that he might detect and rebuke the culprits. On one occasion, when Whitefield, preaching in his pulpit, spoke of the piety that would doubtless be found in a congregation which enjoyed the ministry of so faithful a pastor, Grimshaw interrupted him, exclaiming: 'Oh, sir, for God's sake do not speak so! I pray you do not flatter them; I fear the greater part of them are going to hell with their eyes open.' His prayers against the Haworth races were so fervent that a violent downpour of rain, which once lasted during the three days of their continuance, was regarded by the parishioners as a direct answer, and led to the cessation of the sport. He heartily supported the mission of Wesley, built a Methodist chapel in his own parish, invited itinerant lay preachers to assist him, and was once found cleaning the boots of one of them. In his own parish he was accustomed, besides the ordinary services and sermons, to read the Homilies of the Church, to give expositions of the Articles, and to visit his vast parish, in twelve different places monthly, convening in each the surrounding inhabitants for an exhortation, inquiring minutely into the condition of each member, reconciling enmities, and rebuking vice. The religious revival which he produced was very great. When he came to Haworth there were not twelve communicants in the parish. Before the close of his mission there were nearly 1,200, and on one occasion, when Whitefield was present, no less than thirty-five bottles of wine were used at the sacred table.

His whole life was devoted to a single object. It

was his boast that whenever he died he would not leave a penny behind him. He preached usually more than twelve, sometimes as much as thirty, times in a week. When he met a stranger on the roads he was accustomed to induce him to kneel down with him at once in prayer upon the grass. Not content with traversing every part of his own large parish, or even of his own county, he went on missionary tours through Lancashire, Cheshire, and Derbyshire. He met with much opposition from clergymen into whose parishes he intruded, with some mob violence, and with great ridicule; but his zeal and his humility were proof against all these, and he lived to see many thousands affected by his words. A short time before his death, standing with John Newton on a hill near Haworth, he observed that when he first came there he could ride for half a day to the east or to the west, to the north or to the south, without seeing or hearing of a single truly devout man, whereas many hundreds in his own parish were now fervent believers. He died in 1762, of a putrid fever caught in visiting the sick. His last words were, 'Here goes an unprofitable servant.'[1]

Among the more regular clergy also, we speedily find representatives of Evangelical opinions. In London the most important was probably William Romaine, the son of a Protestant refugee who had fled to England upon the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. After a distinguished University career, followed by ten quiet and studious years in a curacy in Surrey, Romaine came to London in 1748, and he spent the remainder of his life in preaching the doctrine of justification by faith, with extraordinary power, in many different quarters of the metropolis. For five years he was assistant morning preacher in St. George's, Hanover

[1] See Hardy's *Life of Grimshaw* Wesley's *Journal*, 1762. Gledstone's *Whitefield*, p. 486.

Square—a church which was then the very centre of the rank and fashion of England; and he was at last dismissed from his post for the characteristic reason that the crowds who were attracted by his sermons disturbed the parishioners, and made it difficult for them to find their way to their pews. He was also for many years lecturer at St. Dunstan's-in-the-West; but an attempt was made to deprive him of his pulpit, and when it was defeated by a legal decision in his favour, the churchwardens refused to open the church till the exact hour at which the judgment ordered the lecture to begin, or to light it when it was opened. Until the Bishop of London interposed to arrest the scandal, the extraordinary spectacle was often witnessed of the preacher preaching in a crowded church by the light of a single taper, which he held in his own hand. Romaine was a warm friend of Lady Huntingdon and her coadjutors, preached frequently in her chapels as long as they were not separated from the Church, and became at last, partly through her influence, rector of St. Anne's, Blackfriars. He was sincerely attached to the Anglican Church, and sometimes spoke with much bitterness of the Dissenters, and he never appears to have been guilty of the disregard of Church discipline for which the early Methodists were conspicuous. In the learned world he acquired some reputation as editor of the 'Hebrew Dictionary and Concordance' of Marius de Calasio, and he held the Gresham Professorship of Astronomy in 1752, but his lectures in this capacity produced great opposition and dissension, and he was accused of availing himself of his chair to depreciate the very science he professed, on the ground that astronomical observations have no tendency to make men Christians.[1] His fame rests chiefly on the extra-

[1] 'I should be glad to know what use or what benefit these observations have been to the world? . . . Were dying sinners

ordinary popularity of his preaching and of his devotional writings, and on the conspicuous part which he took in opposition to the Jew Bill of 1753. His disposition appears to have been morose, unsocial, and intolerant, and he excited much hostility in every sphere in which he moved; but few contemporary clergymen exercised a deeper or wider influence, or displayed a more perfect devotion to the cause they believed to be true.[1]

Many other remarkable names may be cited. Among them was John Newton, the friend of Cowper, the curate of Olney, and the rector of St. Mary Woolnoth, who, having been for many years an insubordinate sailor, a slave-dealer, and an unbeliever, and having passed, in his wild and adventurous life, through the lowest depths of misery and oppression, had been touched by the Evangelical doctrines, had acquired by indomitable perseverance the attainments requisite for a clergyman, and continued for the space of forty-four years one of the most devoted and single-hearted of Christian ministers. Among them were Venn, the rector of Huddersfield, who inoculated with the Evangelical doctrines the great manufacturing populations of Yorkshire; Rowlands, the itinerant missionary of Wales; Cecil of Bedford Row, Simeon of Cambridge, and Walker of Truro. With much narrowness and fanaticism of judgment, with little range of learning, and no high order of intellectual power, all these possessed, in an eminent degree, the qualities of heart and mind that influence great masses of men; and they

---

ever comforted by the spots on the moon? Was ever miser reclaimed from avarice by Jupiter's belts? or did Saturn's rings ever make a lascivious female chaste? . . . The modern divinity brings you no nearer than 121 millions of miles short of heaven.'—*Gentleman's Magazine*, March 1752.

[1] See Cadogan's *Life of Romaine*. *Life of the Countess of Huntingdon*.

and their colleagues gradually changed the whole spirit of the English Church. They infused into it a new fire and passion of devotion, kindled a spirit of fervent philanthropy, raised the standard of clerical duty, and completely altered the whole tone and tendency of the preaching of its ministers. Before the close of the century the Evangelical movement had become the almost undisputed centre of religious activity in England, and it continued to be so till the rise of the Tractarian movement of 1833.

But beyond all other men it was John Wesley to whom this work was due. Few things in ecclesiastical history are more striking than the energy and the success with which he propagated his opinions. He was gifted with a frame of iron and with spirits that never flagged. 'I do not remember,' he wrote when an old man, 'to have felt lowness of spirits for a quarter of an hour since I was born.'[1] He was accustomed to attribute, probably with much reason, to his perpetual journeys on horseback, the almost superhuman flow of health and vigour which he enjoyed. He lived eighty-seven years, and he continued his efforts to the very close. He rose long before daybreak. He preached usually at five o'clock in the morning. When he was eighty-five, he once delivered more than eighty sermons in eight weeks. In the very last year of his life he went on a missionary journey to Scotland, and on one occasion travelled seventy miles in a single day. During the greater part of his career he was accustomed to preach about 800 sermons a year, and it was computed that in the fifty years of his itinerant life he travelled a quarter of a million of miles, and preached more than 40,000 sermons. Like Whitefield, he had the power of riveting the attention of audiences of 8,000, 10,000,

[1] *Journal*, 1780.

and sometimes even 20,000 souls, and, like Whitefield, a great part of his success depended on the topics he habitually employed; but in other respects his sermons bore no resemblance to the impassioned harangues of his great colleague. His style was simple, terse, colloquial, abounding in homely images, characterised above all things by its extreme directness, by the manifest and complete subordination of all other considerations to the one great end of impressing his doctrines on his hearers, animated by a tone of intense and penetrating sincerity that found its way to the hearts of thousands. He possessed to the highest degree that controlled and reasoning fanaticism which is one of the most powerful agents in moving the passions of men. While preaching doctrines of the wildest extravagance, while representing himself as literally inspired, and his hearers as surrounded by perpetual miracles, his manners and his language were always those of a scholar and a gentleman—calm, deliberate, and self-possessed. He was always dressed with a scrupulous neatness. His countenance, to the very close of his life, was singularly beautiful and expressive, and in his old age his long white hair added a peculiar venerableness to his appearance. Great natural knowledge of men, improved by extraordinary experience, gave him an almost unrivalled skill in dealing with the most various audiences, and the courage with which he never failed to encounter angry mobs, as well as the quiet dignity of manner which never forsook him, added greatly to the effects of his preaching.

His administrative powers were probably still greater than his power as a preacher. Few tasks are more difficult than the organisation into a permanent body of half-educated men, intoxicated with the wildest religious enthusiasm, believing themselves to be all

inspired by the Holy Ghost, and holding opinions that ran perilously near the abyss of Antinomianism. Wesley accomplished the task with an admirable mixture of tact, firmness, and gentleness; and the skill with which he framed the Methodist organisation is sufficiently shown by its later history. Like all men with extraordinary administrative gifts, he had a great love of power, and this fact renders peculiarly honourable his evident reluctance to detach himself from the discipline of his Church.

He has, it is true, no title to be regarded as a great thinker. His mind had not much originality or speculative power, and his leading tenets placed him completely out of harmony with the higher intellect of his time. Holding the doctrine of a particular Providence in such a sense as to believe that the physical phenomena of the universe were constantly changed for human convenience and at human prayers, he could have little sympathy with scientific thought. Assuming as axioms the inspiration of every word of the Bible and his own inspiration in interpreting it, throwing the whole weight of religious proof upon what he termed 'a new class of senses opened in the soul to be the avenues of the invisible world, the evidence of things not seen, as the bodily senses are of visible things,' he was simply indifferent to the gravest historical, critical, and ethical questions that were discussed about him, and difficulties that troubled some of the greatest thinkers were imperceptible for him. No class of opinions are less likely to commend themselves to a judicial and critical intellect than those which he embraced. His mind was incapable of continued doubt. His credulity and confidence on some subjects were unbounded, and his judgments of men were naturally strongly biassed by his theological views. Thus Hume appeared to him merely as 'the most

insolent despiser of truth and virtue that ever appeared in the world,' and he regarded Beattie as incomparably superior both as a writer and a reasoner.[1] Leibnitz he pronounced to be one of the poorest writers he had ever read.[2] He could not pardon Reid for having spoken respectfully of Rousseau, or Robertson for having referred without censure to Lord Kames, or Smollett and Guthrie for having treated witchcraft as a superstition.[3] Still even the literary side of his career is by no means contemptible. He was an indefatigable and very skilful controversialist, a voluminous writer, and a still more voluminous editor. His writings, though they are certainly not distinguished either by originality of thought or by eloquence of expression, are always terse, well reasoned, full of matter and meaning. Unlike a large proportion of his followers, he had no contempt for human learning, and in spite of the incessant activity of his career he found time for much and various reading. He was accustomed to read history, poetry, and philosophy on horseback, and one of the charms of his journals is the large amount of shrewd literary criticism they contain.

His many-sided activity was displayed in the most various fields, and his keen eye was open to every form of abuse. At one time we find him lamenting the glaring inequalities of political representation; that Old Sarum without house or inhabitant should send two members to Parliament; that Looe, 'a town

[1] *Journal*, 1772.

[2] Ibid. 1775.

[3] Ibid. 1770, 1774, 1781. We have an amusing illustration of the theological bias in literary judgments in Toplady. He boasts that England had produced the greatest man in nearly every walk of useful knowledge, the four greatest being 'Archbishop Bradwardin, the prince of divines, Milton, the prince of poets, Sir I. Newton, the prince of philosophers, and Whitefield, the prince of preachers.'—Toplady's *Works*, iv. 130.

near half as large as Islington,' should send four members, while every county in North Wales sent only one. At another he dilated on the costly diffusiveness of English legal documents, or on the charlatanry and inconsistency of English medicine. He set up a dispensary; and, though not a qualified practitioner, he gratuitously administered medicine to the poor. He was a strong advocate of inoculation, which was then coming into use, and of the application of electricity to medicine, and he attempted, partly on sanitary and partly on economical grounds, to discourage the use of tea among the poor. He was among the first to reprobate the horrors of the slave trade, to call attention to the scandalous condition of the gaols, to make collections for relieving the miserable destitution of the French prisoners of war. He supported with the whole weight of his influence the Sunday-school movement. He made praiseworthy efforts to put down among his followers that political corruption which was perhaps the most growing vice of English society. He also took an active, though a very unfortunate part in some of the political questions of the day. He wrote against the concession of relief to the Catholics, and against the right of Wilkes to sit for Middlesex in 1768; and during the American struggle he threw into a more popular form the chief arguments in Dr. Johnson's pamphlet against the Americans, and had probably a considerable influence in forming the public opinion hostile to all concession.[1] It is a curious illustration of his activity that when Pitt, having defeated the Coalition Ministry, obtained

[1] *A Calm Address to our American Colonies.* From 50,000 to 100,000 copies of this pamphlet were sold. Tyerman's *Wesley*, iii. 237. It is remarkable that Wesley never makes the slightest acknowledgment of his obligation to the *Taxation no Tyranny* of Johnson.

supreme power in 1784, Wesley immediately wrote to him suggesting a plan for the readjustment of taxation, and urging him to check suicide by hanging the bodies of those who were guilty of it in chains.

The influence of men bears no kind of proportion to their intellects. Were it otherwise, the small group of men who have effected great changes or developments of religious belief would deserve to rank as the intellectual leaders of the world. No other class have had an influence which has been at once so wide in its range and so profound and searching in its character, and very few have exercised an influence which is so enduring. In these matters, however, character and intellect, preceding and surrounding circumstances, curiously combine; and some of those who have effected the greatest revolutions of popular opinion owe their success quite as much to their weakness as to their strength. It is probably true of Mohammed himself, it is certainly true of such men as Loyola and George Fox, that a vein of insanity which ran through their natures was one great element of their power. If Wesley had not been very credulous and very dogmatic, utterly incapable of a suspended judgment, and utterly insensible to some of the highest intellectual tendencies of his time, it may be safely asserted that his work would have been far less. He does not rank in the first line of the great religious creators and reformers, and a large part of the work with which he is associated was accomplished by others; but it is no exaggeration to say that he has had a wider constructive influence in the sphere of practical religion than any other man who has appeared since the sixteenth century. He lived to see the sect which he founded numbering more than 70,000 souls upon British soil, and about 300 itinerant and 1,000 local preachers raised up from his own people. The different branches of Methodists in the world are

said now to number twelve millions of souls.[1] They have already far outnumbered every other Nonconformist body in England and every other religious body in the United States, and they are probably destined largely to increase, while the influence of the movement transformed for a time the whole spirit of the Established Church, and has been more or less felt in every Protestant community speaking the English tongue.

During the whole of his life Wesley looked upon himself as a clergyman of the Established Church. He began, as we have seen, with strong High Church opinions, and was long a fervent believer in Apostolical succession; and though he gradually modified his other doctrines, he continued to the end to profess his warm adherence to the creed and the worship of the English Church. Nothing can be more unjust than to attribute to him the ambition of a schismatic, or the subversive instincts of a revolutionist. Again and again he exhorted his followers to attend the services of the Church, to abstain from attacking the clergy, and to avoid connecting themselves with any Dissenting body. In the very last year of his life he published a letter, in which he wrote: 'I live and die a member of the Church of England, and no one who regards my judgment or advice will ever separate from it.'[2] But many circumstances—some of them not altogether in his control—tended visibly towards separation. It was, indeed, the inevitable destiny of a body which possessed a distinct and admirable organisation, and which, at the same time, was formed in defiance of the discipline of the parent Church. At first the Methodist services were held at such times as not to interfere with those of the parish church, but gradually they began to encroach

[1] Tyerman's *Wesley*, i. 11. [2] Ibid. iii. 635.

upon the church hours. The lay preachers were a constant source of difficulty. Many of them were bitterly hostile to the clergy, and altogether indisposed to acknowledge the inferiority of their own ecclesiastical position. Wesley frequently but ineffectually endeavoured to obtain for them episcopal consecration. In 1763 he induced a Greek bishop who was visiting England to consecrate one of them; but the step caused so much discontent that it was not repeated, and when some other preachers without his consent obtained a similar consecration, Wesley was much displeased, and expelled them from the society. Some of the lay preachers began, without the consent or approval of Wesley, to administer the sacrament.

Charles Wesley was especially alarmed at these symptoms. His influence with his brother was always exerted in a conservative direction; he urged him to exercise much greater deliberation in the admission of lay preachers, and he gradually withdrew from all active participation in the movement. On the other hand, there were many urging Wesley to take more decided steps, and on one important question a great change had passed over his judgment. A careful study of Lord King's book on the constitution of the Primitive Church, and of the 'Irenicon' of Stillingfleet, had convinced him that bishops and presbyters were originally of one order, and that he had therefore as a presbyter as much right to ordain as to administer the sacrament. This right he hesitated to exercise until new circumstances arose which made the position of his body more difficult. The Toleration Act had given perfect liberty of worship to all Protestant Dissenters who admitted the Trinity, but it had made no provision for a body like the Methodists, who professed to be in full communion and agreement with the Established Church; and some of the clergy availed themselves of the advantage which

this omission gave them to prosecute the Methodists, and thus reduce them to the alternative of closing their chapels, or having them licensed as Dissenting meeting-houses. One of the last important letters which Wesley wrote was a remonstrance with a bishop, who by taking this course was endeavouring to drive them into Dissent. A judgment given in 1781 against Lady Huntingdon placed her chapels legally in the position of Dissenting meeting-houses, and established that no Church of England clergyman had a right to officiate in them. From this time, Venn, Romaine, and other clergymen withdrew from the Methodist chapels.

Another serious complication speedily arose. Owing to some absurd jealousies on both sides, no American bishop had been consecrated before the revolution; and the Americans who desired episcopal ordination had to come over to England to receive it from an English bishop, and to swear in England the oath of allegiance. Bishop Butler had proposed, and Archbishop Secker had strenuously urged, the consecration of a bishop for America; but Dissenting jealousy interposed,[1] and the absurdity continued of a diocese separated by 3,000 miles from its diocesan. With the severance of the political tie, this state of things became of course untenable; and after some difficulty a missionary belonging to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was selected by the Americans, and consecrated in 1784 by Scotch bishops. The Methodists, however, laboured under still greater difficulties than the other Episcopalians. Episcopal clergymen were very thinly scattered in the colony, especially since the revolution, which had induced many of them to emigrate. Of those who remained, a large proportion were bitterly hostile to the Methodists, who often found themselves without anyone

[1] See Porteus's *Life of Secker*, pp. li–lv.

to administer to them the sacrament, or to baptise their children. Under these circumstances Wesley took the bold step of consecrating Coke Superintendent or Bishop of the American Methodists. He did not do so until he had vainly sought assistance from the Bishop of London, and till the American Methodists had shown a strong disposition to take the matter, if much further delayed, into their own hands. This decisive step was taken in 1784; and in the following year Wesley ordained ministers for Scotland.

The somewhat ambiguous position which Wesley occupied towards the Church has for a long time been more or less perpetuated by the sect which he founded. Ultimately it is probable that the position of the Anglican Church as an Establishment will be injuriously affected by the great numerical secession from its pale, and especially by the Nonconformity of Wales; but hitherto the Methodist body has proved faithful to the spirit of its founder, and does not appear to have participated largely in the jealousy of Dissent. What the Church lost in numbers it more than gained in vitality. The Evangelical movement, which directly or indirectly originated with Wesley, produced a revival of religious feeling that has incalculably increased the efficiency of almost every religious body in the community, while at the same time it has not seriously affected party politics. On the great American controversy, as we have seen, the leading Methodists were divided, Wesley and Fletcher of Madeley being strongly opposed to the American claims, while the bulk of the Calvinistic Methodists were inclined to favour them. The many great philanthropic efforts which arose, or at least derived their importance, from the Evangelical movement, soon became prominent topics of parliamentary debate; but they were not the peculiar glory of any political party, and they formed a common

ground on which many religious denominations could co-operate.

Great, however, as was the importance of the Evangelical revival in stimulating these efforts, it had other consequences of perhaps a wider and more enduring influence. Before the close of the century in which it appeared, a spirit had begun to circulate in Europe threatening the very foundations of society and of belief. The revolt against the supernatural theory of Christianity which had been conducted by Voltaire and the Encyclopædists, the material conception of man and of the universe which sprang from the increased study of physical science and from the metaphysics of Condillac and Helvetius, the wild social dreams which Rousseau had clothed in such a transcendent eloquence, the misery of a high-spirited people ground to the dust by unnecessary wars and by partial and unjust taxation, the imbecility and corruption of rulers and priests, had together produced in France a revolutionary spirit, which in its intensity and its proselytising fervour was unequalled since the days of the Reformation. It was soon felt in many lands. Millions of fierce and ardent natures were intoxicated by dreams of an impossible equality and of a complete social and political reorganisation. Many old abuses perished, but a tone of thought and feeling was introduced into European life which could only lead to anarchy, and at length to despotism, and was beyond all others fatal to that measured and ordered freedom which can alone endure. Its chief characteristics were a hatred of all constituted authority, an insatiable appetite for change, a habit of regarding rebellion as the normal as well as the noblest form of political self-sacrifice, a disdain for all compromise, a contempt for all tradition, a desire to level all ranks and subvert all establishments, a determination to seek

progress, not by the slow and cautious amelioration of existing institutions, but by sudden, violent, and revolutionary change. Religion, property, civil authority, and domestic life, were all assailed, and doctrines incompatible with the very existence of government were embraced by multitudes with the fervour of a religion. England, on the whole, escaped the contagion. Many causes conspired to save her, but among them a prominent place must, I believe, be given to the new and vehement religious enthusiasm which was at that very time passing through the middle and lower classes of the people, which had enlisted in its service a large proportion of the wilder and more impetuous reformers, and which recoiled with horror from the anti-Christian tenets that were associated with the Revolution in France.

The revolutionary spirit was of foreign origin, and its opponents were able to appeal to a strong national antipathy; but in England itself a movement, not less momentous, and in some of its aspects scarcely less menacing, was about the same time taking place. The closing years of the eighteenth century witnessed the beginning of a series of great mechanical inventions, which changed with unexampled rapidity the whole course of English industry, and in little more than a generation created manufacturing centres unequalled in the world. Scarcely any event in modern history has exercised a wider social and political influence than this sudden growth of the manufacturing towns, and it brought with it some political and moral dangers of the gravest kind. It was in many respects a movement of disintegration, breaking the ties of sympathy between class and class, and destroying the habits of discipline and subordination that once extended through the whole community. Forms of industry which had hitherto been carried on in the domestic circle, or in

small establishments under the constant supervision of the master, were transferred to the crowded manufactory. Labour became more nomadic. All the ties of habit and tradition were relaxed. Working men, drawn from the most distant quarters, were agglomerated by thousands in great towns, bound to their employers by no other tie than that of interest, exposed to the fever of an immensely stimulated competition, and to the trying ordeal of sudden, rapid, and unforeseen fluctuations in their wages and their employments. The gambling spirit produced by these fluctuations, the vast progress in means of locomotion and of information, the cosmopolitan spirit of free trade, all tended to produce among them a restless discontent. The inflammable elements in the nation were massed together to an unprecedented extent, and temptations were greatly multiplied while restraints were weakened. The war between capital and labour began. Wealth was immensely increased, but the inequalities of its distribution were aggravated. The contrast between extravagant luxury and abject misery became much more frequent and much more glaring than before. The wealthy employer ceased to live among his people; the quarters of the rich and of the poor became more distant, and every great city soon presented those sharp divisions of classes and districts in which the political observer discovers one of the most dangerous symptoms of revolution.

It would be a gross exaggeration to represent these as the sole consequences of the vast growth in manufacturing industry which took place in England in the closing years of the eighteenth century, and which has advanced with accelerated rapidity to our own time. This is not the place to show how greatly it has stimulated the progressive forces of English political life, in how many ways it has improved the material and intellectual position of the working classes, how many

paths of ambition formerly closed to them it has thrown open, or how greatly it has added to the material resources which the nation can command in every conflict with her enemies. But few thinkers of any weight would, I believe, now deny that the evils and dangers accompanying these benefits were greatly underrated by most of the economists of the last generation. The true greatness and welfare of nations depend mainly on the amount of moral force that is generated within them. Society never can continue in a state of tolerable security when there is no other bond of cohesion than a mere money tie, and it is idle to expect the different classes of the community to join in the self-sacrifice and enthusiasm of patriotism if all unselfish motives are excluded from their several relations. Every change of conditions which widens the chasm and impairs the sympathy between rich and poor cannot fail, however beneficial may be its other effects, to bring with it grave dangers to the State. It is incontestable that the immense increase of manufacturing industry and of the manufacturing population, has had this tendency; and it is, therefore, I conceive, peculiarly fortunate that it should have been preceded by a religious revival, which opened a new spring of moral and religious energy among the poor, and at the same time gave a powerful impulse to the philanthropy of the rich.

But the chief triumph of a religious movement is not to be found in its action upon large classes of the community, or within the noisy arena of politics. It is to be found rather in those spheres and moments of life which beyond all others are secluded from the eye of history. Every religion which is worthy of the name must provide some method of consoling men in the first agonies of bereavement, some support in the extremes of pain and sickness, above all, some stay in the hour of death. It must operate, not merely or mainly upon

the strong and healthy reason, but also in the twilight of the understanding, in the half-lucid intervals that precede death, when the imagination is enfeebled and discoloured by disease, when all the faculties are confused and dislocated, when all the buoyancy and hopefulness of nature are crushed. At such a time it is not sufficient for most men to rest upon the review of a well-spent life. Such a retrospect to all of us is too full of saddening and humiliating memories. It is an effort too great for the jaded mind. It can at best afford but a cold and languid satisfaction amid the bitterness of death. It is at this moment that priestly influence is most felt. The Catholic priest asserting with emphatic confidence a divine power of absolving the sinner, arresting and overawing the wandering imagination by imposing rites, demanding only complete submission at a time when beyond all others the mind is least disposed to resist, and professing, on the condition of that submission, to conduct the dying man into an eternity of happiness, can provide a stay upon which sinking nature can rest in that gloomy hour. The immense consolation which has been thus infused into innumerable minds at the time when consolation is most needed, can be hardly overstated. To secure the efficacy of this last absolution upon the imagination of the dying, has been a main end of all the teaching and of all the ceremonies of the Church. For the sake of this, men have endured all the calamities which priestcraft has brought upon the world, have bartered the independence of their minds, and shut their eyes to the light of truth. By connecting this absolution indissolubly with complete submission to their sacerdotal claims, the Catholic priests framed the most formidable engine of religious tyranny that has ever been employed to disturb or subjugate the world.

It is the glory of Protestantism, whenever it remains

faithful to the spirit of its founders, that it has destroyed this engine. The Evangelical teacher emphatically declares that the intervention of no human being, and of no human rite, is necessary in the hour of death. Yet he can exercise a soothing influence not less powerful than that of the Catholic priest. The doctrine of justification by faith, which diverts the wandering mind from all painful and perplexing retrospect, concentrates the imagination on one Sacred Figure, and persuades the sinner that the sins of a life have in a moment been effaced, has enabled thousands to encounter death with perfect calm, or even with vivid joy, and has consoled innumerable mourners at a time when all the commonplaces of philosophy would appear the idlest of sounds.

This doctrine had fallen almost wholly into abeyance in England, and had scarcely any place among realised convictions, when it was revived by the Evangelical party. It is impossible to say how largely it has contributed to mitigate some of the most acute forms of human misery. Historians, and even ecclesiastical historians, are too apt to regard men simply in classes or communities or corporations, and to forget that the keenest of our sufferings as well as the deepest of our joys take place in those periods when we are most isolated from the movements of society. Whatever may be thought of the truth of the doctrine, no candid man will question its power in the house of mourning and in the house of death. 'The world,' wrote Wesley, 'may not like our Methodists and Evangelical people, but the world cannot deny that they die well.'

These have been the great benefits which flowed from the Evangelical revival of the last century. The evils that resulted from it I have already indicated. The foregoing narrative will supply abundant evidence of the religious terrorism by which it clouded or embittered many sensitive natures; of its austere and

sour enmity to some of the most innocent forms of human enjoyment; of the extreme narrowness of its conceptions of life; of its hostility to culture and free research. Some, indeed, of the Methodist leaders were men of no contemptible knowledge. Wesley and Berridge were distinguished members of their university. Romaine was an accomplished Hebrew scholar. Dr. Walker, who took a conspicuous part in the revival in Ireland, was a Senior Fellow of Trinity College. But the great majority of the preachers were half-educated men, and those who were not so, usually discouraged and decried secular learning. 'Human science' was, indeed, one of their favourite topics of abuse. Their theory of religion laid no stress upon the voice of antiquity. They believed firmly in an ever-present Divine Spirit illuminating an inspired page, and they looked with suspicion and dislike upon every voluntary pursuit which was not directly subservient to religious ends. They soon discovered, too, that the most cultivated minds were precisely those that were least susceptible to those violent and unreasoning religious emotions which they ascribed to the direct action of the Holy Ghost. Methodism has long since taken its position as pre-eminently and almost exclusively the religion of the middle and lower classes of society; and the Evangelical school that sprang from it, though it obtained a temporary ascendency in the Church of the upper classes, had never any real sympathy with the intellect of England. Regarding all doubt on religious matters as criminal, discouraging every form of study that could possibly produce it, deifying strong internal persuasion, and shutting its eyes on principle against every discovery that could impugn its tenets, it has been essentially the school of those who form their opinions rather by emotion than by reasoning, and who deliberately refuse to face the intellectual difficulties of

the question. Its teaching lends itself admirably to impassioned rhetoric, and it has accordingly been rich in popular preachers, but in the higher forms of intellect it has every generation been more conspicuously barren. In the face of physical science, of modern Biblical criticism, and of all the light which history and comparative mythology have of late years thrown on the genesis of religions; the old theory of verbal inspiration, the old methods of Biblical interpretation, and the old prescientific conception of a world governed by perpetual acts of supernatural interference, still hold their ground in the Evangelical pulpit. The incursions of hostile science have been met by the barrier of an invincible prejudice—by the belief, sedulously inculcated from childhood, that what are termed orthodox opinions are essential to salvation, and that doubt, and every course of inquiry that leads to doubt, should be avoided as a crime. It is a belief which is not only fatal to habits of intellectual honesty and independence in those who accept it, but is also a serious obstacle in the path of those who do not. The knowledge that many about him will regard any deviation from the traditional cast of opinions as the greatest of calamities and of crimes, seldom fails, according to the disposition of the inquirer, to drive him into hypocritical concealments or into extreme and exaggerated bitterness.

The Evangelical movement has thus seriously aggravated the dangers of a period of great religious transition. It has weakened the love of truth and the spirit of inquiry wherever it has passed. It has also revived religious animosities, brought semi-theological questions into a renewed prominence in politics, and in many ways strengthened the spirit of intolerance. Members of this party were among the bitterest opponents of the attempt that was made in 1778 to relieve the clergy from the subscription to the Articles, and

among the most active agents in the later prosecution of sceptical writings; and one of the first effects of their influence in Parliament was an increased stringency of Sabbatarian legislation. To the strength of Methodist and Evangelical opinion is mainly due the strange anomaly that, at the present day, after nearly fifty years of almost uninterrupted democratic legislation, the great majority of public museums and galleries in England are closed on the only day on which the bulk of the people could enjoy them. The working classes have thus been deprived of a source of amusement and instruction of pre-eminent value, and the public-houses of their most formidable competitors. The Evangelical movement anticipated, in many of its aspects, that great reaction which passed over Europe after the French Revolution, and it contributed powerfully to perpetuate and intensify it.

But it is especially on the Catholic question that the political influence of the party was injurious. The Evangelicals are not, indeed, responsible for the scandalously intolerant laws that were passed against the Catholics after the Revolution, but they contributed very largely to retard the full acknowledgment of their claims. Wesley, as we have seen, wrote against the relaxation of the penal code. Scott, who was perhaps the most popular writer of the school, maintained that the removal of Catholic disabilities would be a great sin;[1] and from the time of the Lord George Gordon riots in 1780 to the time of Catholic emancipation in 1829 the bulk of the Evangelical clergy strained every nerve to prevent the concession of toleration and political power to the Catholics. Like all men who are endeavouring to oppose the main current of their age,

[1] See on this subject the admirable essay on 'The Evangelical Succession,' in Stephens' *Ecclesiastical Biographies*.

they failed, but the evil they effected was not the less serious. They produced on both sides an enduring sectarian animosity, and an extreme exaggeration of distinctive doctrines, and they delayed the just and necessary settlement of this great question until the boon had lost all power of healing divisions and allaying discontent. Had the Catholic question been settled at the close of the last century, or even in the first decade of the present one, and had the settlement comprised a moderate endowment of the priests, Irish discontent might have long been a thing of the past. The most educated Catholic laymen were then the indisputable leaders of their co-religionists. The priests were by taste and profession almost wholly outside the circle of politics. Their interests might easily have been attached to those of the Government, and the prevailing spirit of the Vatican was singularly moderate and conciliatory. It is one of the great misfortunes of English history, that the emancipation of the Catholics was only conceded after a long and bitter agitation, which evoked the worst passions and principles that were dormant among them, broke the ascendency of the educated laymen, and, by forcing the priests into the forefront of the fray, introduced a new and dangerous element into English political life. Several causes concurred to produce the delay, but among them none was more powerful than that fierce anti-Catholic spirit which the Evangelical movement had maintained among the people of England.

CHAPTER IX.

ONE of the most difficult problems which the framers of constitutions are called upon to solve is that of providing that the direction of affairs shall be habitually in the hands of men of very exceptional ability, and at the same time of preventing the instability, insecurity, and alarm which perpetual and radical changes in the Government must produce. Among the many objections to hereditary despotism, one of the most obvious is that it implies that the members of a single family, educated for the most part under circumstances peculiarly fitted to enervate the character, shall, during many generations, be competent to discharge one of the most arduous of human undertakings, the direction of the complicated and often conflicting interests of a nation. Among the many objections to elective monarchy, the most serious is that it condemns the country in which it exists to perpetual conspiracies, tumults, and intrigues, which are fatal to the formation of settled political habits, and derange every part of the national organisation. Considered as a matter of pure theory, no form of government might appear more reasonable than that under which the leading men in the country assemble at each vacancy of the throne to choose the man who appears to them the most fitted for the crown. But no form of government has been more decisively condemned by experience. The elected sovereign is always likely to conspire with the assistance either of his own army or of foreign

Powers to perpetuate the sovereignty in his family. The other great powers in the State, through fear of such conspiracy, are tempted to reduce the military establishments below what is necessary for the security of the nation. Bitter factions, profoundly detrimental to the well-being of the community, are inevitably formed among the great families who are competing to raise their candidates to the throne. Every illness of the sovereign gives rise to intrigues, conspiracies, and insecurity; his death usually leads to disorder, and sometimes to anarchy and civil war. Each new king ascends the throne tainted by the arts of electioneering, deeply pledged to one section of his people, the object of the vehement hostility of another section, and conscious that large classes are looking forward eagerly to his death. Such are the inevitable vices of elective monarchy, and they are so grave that, with the exception of the Papacy, which rests upon conditions wholly unlike those of any other monarchy, this form of government has been long extirpated from Europe. The crowns of Sweden and of Denmark became in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries strictly hereditary. The German Empire, and the kingdoms of Hungary, Poland, and Bohemia passed away or were absorbed, and they perished mainly by their own incurable weakness.

Several attempts have been made in the way of compromise to obviate these evils, and to combine the advantages of hereditary and of elective monarchy. One theory of government which was widely diffused in antiquity, and which may be traced far into the Middle Ages, but which has now passed altogether out of the sphere of practical politics, was that royalty was hereditary in a single family, but that the chiefs, tribes, or nations had the power of electing whom they pleased from among its members.

Another theory, which, if not openly avowed, has been sometimes practically adopted, is that the King holds his office only during good behaviour. In modern France the sovereign has always been an active power in the State, continually intervening in the direction of affairs, but liable, whenever he showed himself either incompetent or unpopular, to be displaced by a sudden revolution. To men who are firmly convinced that the ecclesiastical notion about the divine right of kings is a baseless superstition, that the sovereign is but the first magistrate of the State, and that the office he holds is intended for the benefit of his people, such a system appears at first sight very simple. In the natural course of events it must often happen that the sovereign, being selected by no principle of competition and being exposed to more than ordinary temptations, must be contemptible both in intellect and character, and large sections of his subjects come to look upon him as nothing better than an overpaid and inefficient official, who, on the first offence, should be unceremoniously discharged.

But the evils which have resulted from the predominance of such a way of thinking in a community are so great that they have led many who have no personal sympathy with the superstitious estimate of royalty, as a matter of expediency, rather to encourage than oppose it. An hereditary monarchy which subsists only on the condition of the monarch being a superior man must be in a chronic state of insecurity, and the stability of the government is one of the first conditions of national well-being. Every revolution brings to the surface the worst elements in the community, demoralises public life, impairs material interests, and weakens the empire of the law. It is a great calamity for a people when its criminal classes have learnt to take an active part in politics. It is a

still greater calamity when the appetite for organic and revolutionary change has taken hold of large classes, when the political enthusiasm of opposition assumes the form of rebellion, and when the prevailing disposition is to undervalue the slow process of constitutional reform, and to look upon force as the natural solution of political questions. This habit of regarding revolution as in itself admirable and desirable, and making, in the words of Burke, the extreme remedy of the State its habitual diet, is perhaps the most fatal of all the diseases which now affect political bodies in Europe. It necessarily throws the rulers into the posture of self-defence, and makes them nervously and constantly jealous of their subjects. It produces reactions in which the most important reforms are endangered, drives from politics the very class whose co-operation is most valuable, and exposes every nation in which it exists to the opposite evils of despotism and anarchy. Political liberty, whether in Parliament or in the Press, is only safe and permanently possible when oppositions are content to act within the lines of the Constitution and the limits of the law, and the amount of freedom which any nation can endure is measured much less by its positive civilisation and intelligence, than by the weakness of the element of anarchy that is within it.

There are also other evils, if possible more serious, which follow in the train of revolutions. Every deposed dynasty has its devoted followers, and the nation is thus cursed with the calamity of a disputed succession, which often leads to civil war, and always makes it impossible for the Government to command the whole national energies in great emergencies of the State. No other influence is so fatal to the spirit of patriotism. Through hostility to the Government a large proportion of the heroism, fidelity, and devotion of the nation is

permanently alienated from its affairs, and forms a clear deduction from its strength. Subjects learn to look with indifference or complacency upon the disasters of their country, and to throw perpetual obstacles in the course of its policy. Rulers learn to pursue two policies—a national one intended to benefit the nation, and a dynastic one intended to benefit themselves. It was the great merit of the conciliatory policy of Walpole that it saved England during the period of its disputed succession from a large part of these evils; but in France, during the period that has elapsed since the Revolution, they have all been abundantly displayed. A soil once peculiarly fertile in political genius blasted by repeated revolutions; large classes wholly separated from the management of affairs, or animated by an insane passion for anarchy; a Government embarrassed by dynastic and revolutionary Opposition in the most critical moments of its foreign policy, and vainly seeking by wild military adventures to divert to foreign channels the passions that are dangerous at home; an administration, both civil and military, deeply tainted with corruption; a great empire invaded, humiliated and dismembered, and finally all the elements of disorder rising into fierce insurrection against the Government at the very time when a foreign enemy was surrounding the capital; these have been in our own day the fruits of that diseased appetite for organic change and that contempt for all constituted authority which the Great Revolution implanted in the chief cities of France. Blind indeed must be that politician who fails to perceive their significance, who has not learnt from this long train of calamities the danger of tampering with the central pillars of the State, and letting loose those revolutionary torrents which spread such ruin and desolation in their path.

The problem of combining stability, capacity, and political freedom has, in modern constitutional monarchies of the English type, been most fully met by a careful division of powers. The sovereignty is strictly hereditary, surrounded by a very large amount of reverence, and sheltered by constitutional forms from criticism or opposition, but at the same time it is so restricted in its province that it has, or ought to have, no real influence on legislation. The King, according to a fundamental maxim, 'can do no wrong.' The responsibility of every political act rests solely with the minister, and, as he has the whole responsibility, he has a right to claim the whole management. The credit of success and the stigma of failure belong alike to him. The King is placed altogether above the vicissitudes of party and of politics; he is confined to the discharge of certain offices which are universally admitted to be useful and essential, and which at the same time require not more than ordinary abilities. The chief efficient power, on the other hand, in a constitutional monarchy, is virtually, though not avowedly, as truly elective as in a republic, for although the Sovereign chooses the minister, he is restricted in his choice to the statesman whom the dominant political party has selected as its leader, and who has obtained the confidence of Parliament.

In this system the direct political power of the Sovereign is very small, but yet the position which he occupies is more important than might at first sight be imagined. In the first place, as the head of society, the patron of art, the dispenser of international courtesies, the supreme representative of his country in the council of nations, he discharges social, and, so to speak, ornamental functions, both of dignity and value, and in the next place he contributes very largely to foster the patriotic enthusiasm which is the animating principle

and moral force of national greatness. The great majority of men in political matters are governed neither by reason nor by knowledge, but by the associations of the imagination, and for such men loyalty is the first and natural form of patriotism. In the thrill of common emotion that passes through the nation when some great sorrow or some great happiness befalls the reigning dynasty, they learn to recognise themselves as members of a single family. The throne is to them the symbol of national unity—the chief object of patriotic interest and emotion. It strikes their imaginations. It elicits their enthusiasm. It is the one rallying cry they will answer and understand. Tens of thousands of men who are entirely indifferent to party distinctions and to ministerial changes, who are too ignorant or too occupied to care for any great political question, and to whom government rarely appears in any other light than as a machinery for taxing them, regard the monarch with a feeling of romantic devotion, and are capable of great efforts of self-sacrifice in his cause. The circle of political feeling is thus extended. The sum of enthusiasm upon which the nation in critical times can count is largely increased, and, however much speculative critics may disparage the form which it assumes, practical statesmen will not disdain any of the tributary rills that swell the great tide of patriotism. Even in the case of more educated men, it is extremely conducive to the strength, unity, and purity of the national sentiment, that the supreme ruler of the nation should be above the animosities of party, and that his presence at the head of affairs should not be the result of the defeat of one section of his people. In a great composite empire, consisting largely of self-governed colonies, the importance of the monarchy as a bond of unity is especially great. In such colonies the Parliament of the mother

country can claim no authority and inspire no enthusiasm, and any extension of its power is viewed with jealousy. In the outlying portions of the Empire, the throne, more than any other part of the Constitution, symbolises imperial unity and elicits loyal affection. No wise statesman can doubt that the cohesion between the different parts of the British Empire would be most seriously affected if the monarchical constitution of that Empire were destroyed.

To these advantages it must be added that the monarchical form of government provides a simple and admirably efficacious machinery for effecting without convulsion the necessary ministerial changes. In no other form of government do profound mutations of men and policy, violent conflicts of opinion, disordered ambitions, and glaring instances of administrative incapacity, affect so slightly the stability of the Constitution. A ministerial crisis has no affinity to a revolution. The permanence of the supreme authority, unchallenged and undisturbed amid all the conflicts of parties, calms the imaginations of men. The continuity of affairs is unbroken. The shock is deadened. The changes take place with regularity and in a restricted orbit, and the country is saved from an insecurity which long before it touches the limit of anarchy is disastrous to the prosperity of nations. Indirectly the monarchy has a great political influence, for if it did not exist the aristocracy could hardly subsist as a considerable political power. In the distribution of non-political patronage the Sovereign may not unreasonably claim a real voice, and if he be an able man the experience derived from an official connection with many successive ministries, and the peculiar sources of knowledge arising from his relations with foreign Courts, will never be wholly unfelt in the councils of the nation. In a few rare cases of nearly balanced claims

he has a real power of deciding to whom he will entrust the task of forming an administration; in a few rare cases, when a ministry commanding a majority in Parliament is pursuing a course which appears plainly repugnant to the feelings of the country, he may justifiably exercise his prerogative to dissolve Parliament, and submit the question to the decision of the country. But in the immense majority of cases he is at once neutral and powerless in party politics. He simply puts in motion a machine the action of which is elsewhere determined, and is no more responsible for the policy to which he assents than a judge for the laws which he administers. The spirit of loyalty, while it remains a powerful adjunct to the spirit of patriotism, has thus ceased to be in any degree prejudicial to liberty. The position of the King in the Constitution resembles that of the Speaker in the House of Commons, and like that dignitary his political neutrality and the deference with which he is regarded contribute largely to his utility.

The extreme importance of freeing the Sovereign from all responsibility and withdrawing him from all official influence in politics, wherever the Parliament is a real exponent of the people's will and is at the same time the most powerful body in the State, may be easily proved. In the great majority of cases he must necessarily be a man of very ordinary ability, and even were it otherwise, his exclusion from Parliament and from the common life of his people deprives him of the kind of experience which is most essential for a popular statesman. And no statesman, though he possessed the ability and experience of a Walpole, a Chatham, or a Peel, could conduct the policy of the nation for the period of a long reign without occasionally incurring violent unpopularity and differing from the majority of the legislators. In a purely constitutional country this causes little disturbance, for the minister at once retires

and is replaced by a statesman who shares the views of the majority. But in the case of the Sovereign no such expedient is possible. He must remain at his post. He must eventually carry out the policy of his Parliament, and select advisers in whom it has confidence. If then he regards himself as personally responsible for the policy of the nation, and if he be a man of strong, conscientious political convictions, his position will soon become intolerable. He cannot resist without danger, or yield without humiliation. He will be in the position of an irremovable Prime Minister, compelled to carry out a policy which he detests, and to select his subordinates from among his opponents. A more painful, a more insecure, a more fatally false position could hardly be conceived, but it must be that of every sovereign who in a constitutional monarchy is an active party in politics. If the collision be public, it may shake the monarchy to its basis. If it be confined to the precincts of the council-room, it is only a little less dangerous. A secret influence habitually exercised is sure to be suspected, to be exaggerated, and to be misrepresented. The national policy will almost inevitably be weakened when the confidence of the Sovereign is withheld from the ministers, or when he is perpetually interfering with their conduct. Court intrigues, secret and unofficial advisers, responsible ministers surrendering their real convictions in deference to the wishes of an irresponsible sovereign, are the natural results; and even if the firmness of ministers succeeds in averting them, it is no small evil that the duty of discussing in detail every political step with the Sovereign should be added to the almost overwhelming burden which already rests upon parliamentary statesmen. The King may retain a great influence in the management of affairs where Parliament is altogether a subordinate body, restricted in its

functions and authority. He may even retain it, though more precariously, when Parliament has become the strongest body of the State, if the composition of that Parliament is so exclusive or aristocratic that he can sway it by the influences at his disposal. But whenever Parliament has become a direct expression of the people's will, and especially whenever the existence of a free press and the aggregation of a large proportion of the population in great towns has given popular opinion an irresistible volume and momentum, the withdrawal of the Sovereign from the arena is equally essential to his security and to his dignity. The only political power he can reasonably be suffered to exercise is that of a suspensory veto, preventing hasty legislation, and above all delaying the decision of Parliament on great questions till they have been brought directly before the constituencies by an election. But this power—which should certainly be lodged somewhere in the Constitution—is exercised as efficiently and much less invidiously by the House of Lords, and the royal veto has accordingly fallen into desuetude and has not been employed since the reign of Anne.

The gradual but substantial realisation of this ideal of constitutional monarchy has since the period of the Act of Settlement, been only slightly due to legislation, or at least to legislation which was intended to affect the position of the Crown. It has resulted partly from a series of historical facts growing out of the accession of the House of Hanover which have been described in a former volume, and partly from the steady subsequent growth of the popular element in the Constitution. The reigning Sovereign has exactly the same legal power of vetoing bills passed by both Houses of Parliament as William III. or the Stuarts, but it is a power which it has become impossible to exercise with safety. The Cabinet, which has gradually drawn to itself nearly all

the ancient powers of the Privy Council, which sits without the presence of the Sovereign, and which determines the policy of the Government, is a body entirely unknown to the law and to the theory of the Constitution; and it is no special enactment, but only the silent strengthening of party government, that has virtually deprived the Sovereign of his legally unrestricted power of choosing his ministers. Even the power so largely exercised by the Tudors and by James I. of changing the composition of the representative body by summoning previously unrepresented towns to send members to Parliament, was in theory untouched by the Revolution, and no less a writer than Locke defended the propriety of extinguishing the rotten boroughs and readjusting the proportion of members to electors by a simple exercise of prerogative.[1] Such schemes soon became impossible, but the form which popular government has assumed in England is mainly to be attributed to the Whig party, who, while they have combated steadily the Tory doctrine of the divine right of kings, and the conception of monarchy that flows from it, and have restricted within very narrow limits the political functions of the Sovereign, have at the same time, unlike many continental Liberals, carefully respected his dignity and his office, and made it a main object to place both outside the sphere of controversy. But in the eighteenth century the Whig ideal was still far from its attainment, and George III. is the last instance of an English sovereign endeavouring systematically to impose his individual opinion upon the nation, and in a great degree succeeding in his attempt.

---

[1] Locke, *On Government*, book ii, ch. xiii. See, too, Hallam's *Const. Hist.* ch. xiii. O'Connell once drew up a legal argument to prove that it was within the prerogative of the Crown to restore the Irish Parliament by its sole action. See O'Neil Daunt's *Personal Recollections of O'Connell*, ch. xvi.

When George II. died, on October 25, 1760, his grandson and successor had but just completed his twenty-second year. The life of the young Prince had hitherto been very unsuitable for the task he was to fulfil. Since his thirteenth year, when his father died, he had lived entirely with his mother, and he exhibited during his whole career the characteristic merits and defects of a female education. His mother was a woman of a somewhat hard, reserved, and tortuous character; with few friendships and several bitter enmities; with a power of concealing her true sentiments which baffled even those who came in closest connection with her; strict in the observance of her religious duties, and in her care of her nine children; eminently discreet in her dealings with a bad husband and a jealous father-in-law; deeply imbued with the narrow prejudices of a small German Court, fond of power, unamiable, and somewhat soured by adversity. The early death of her husband had deprived her of the prospect of a crown, and although after his death Leicester House ceased to be a centre of active opposition, the old King looked upon both the Princess and his grandchild with jealousy, and they had in consequence little intercourse with the Court circle, with the Whig ministers, and even with the other members of the royal family. The education of the young Prince was feebly and fitfully conducted; and it is remarkable that among his preceptors Scott had been recommended by Bolingbroke, while Stone had been suspected of Jacobitism. They appear to have discharged their functions very ill; for George III. was always singularly deficient in literary culture. Lord Waldegrave, who was much the ablest of his governors, described him as a boy of respectable abilities, but great constitutional indolence; scrupulous, dutiful, ignorant of evil, and sincerely pious, but neither generous nor frank; harsh in his judgments of others,

with strong prejudices, indomitable obstinacy, and great command over his passions, exceedingly tenacious of his resentments, and exhibiting them chiefly by prolonged fits of sullenness. His indolence he succeeded in completely overcoming, but the other lines of this not very pleasing picture continued during his whole life.

He mixed little in the world—scarcely at all with the young nobility. His mother said that their lax manners would probably corrupt her son. Her enemies declared that the real explanation of this strange seclusion was her own insatiable avarice of power, which made her wish beyond all things to establish a complete ascendency over his mind, and to withdraw him from every influence that could rival her own. Like most members of German royal families, she exaggerated the prerogative of monarchy to the highest degree, and her favourite exhortation, 'George, be a king!' is said to have left a deep impression on the mind of her son. The most important figure in the small circle was John, Earl of Bute, a Scotch nobleman who had held an office in the household of Frederick, Prince of Wales, had lived after his death for some years a life of more than common retirement in Scotland, and, on the establishment of the household of the young Prince, had been placed at the head of it as Groom of the Stole. He was a man of some literary and artistic taste, but of very limited talents, entirely inexperienced in public business, arrogant, reserved, and unpopular in his temper, and with extreme views of the legitimate powers of royalty. The very confidential relations of Bute with the Princess gave rise to a scandal which was widely spread and generally believed.[1] He became the chief adviser or instructor of her son, and strengthened in his mind those plans

[1] See e.g. Lord Waldegrave's *Memoirs*, p. 53. Walpole's *Memoirs of George II.* ii. 204, 205.

for the emancipation of the royal authority which George III. pursued steadily throughout his whole life.

The new Sovereign came to the throne amid an enthusiasm such as England had hardly seen since Charles II. restored the monarchy. By the common consent of all parties the dynastic contest was regarded as closed, and after two generations of foreign and unsympathetic rulers, the nation, which has always been peculiarly intolerant of strangers, accepted with delight an English king. The favourable impression was still further confirmed when the more salient points of the private character of the King became generally understood. Simple, regular, and abstemious in all his tastes and habits, deeply religious without affectation or enthusiasm, a good son, a faithful husband, a kind master, and (except when he had met with gross ingratitude) an affectionate father, he exhibited through his whole reign, and in a rare perfection, that type of decorous and domestic virtue which the English middle classes most highly prize. The proclamation against immorality with which he began his reign; the touching piety with which, at his coronation, he insisted on putting aside his crown when receiving the sacrament; his rebuke to a Court preacher who had praised him in a sermon; his suppression of Sunday levees; his discouragement of gambling at Court; his letter of remonstrance to an Archbishop of Canterbury who had allowed balls in his palace; his constant attendance and reverential manner at religious services; his solemn and pious resignation under great private misfortunes, contrasted admirably with the open immorality of his father, his grandfather, and his great-grandfather, and with the outrageous licentiousness of his own brothers and of his own sons. He never sought for popularity; but he had many of the kingly graces,

and many of the national tastes that are most fitted to obtain it. He went through public ceremonies with much dignity, and although his manner in private was hurried and confused, it was kind and homely, and not without a certain unaffected grace. Unlike his two predecessors, he was emphatically a gentleman, and he possessed to a rare degree the royal art of enhancing small favours by a gracious manner and a few well-chosen words. His country tastes, his love of field sports, his keen interest in the great public schools, endeared him to large classes of his subjects; and, though he was neither brilliant nor witty, several of his terse and happy sayings are still remembered. He was also a very brave man. In the Wilkes riots, in 1769, when his palace was attacked; in the Lord George Gordon riots, in 1780, when his presence of mind contributed largely to save London; in 1786, when a poor madwoman attempted to stab him at the entrance of St. James's Palace; in 1795, when he was assailed on his way to Parliament; in 1800, when he was fired at in a theatre, he exhibited the most perfect composure amid danger. His habit in dating his letters, of marking, not only the day, but the hour and the minute in which he wrote, illustrates not unhappily the microscopic attention which he paid to every detail of public business, and which was the more admirable because his natural tendency was towards sloth. In matters that were not connected with his political prejudices, his sincere appreciation of piety, and his desire to do good, sometimes overcame his religious bigotry and his hatred of change. Thus he always spoke with respect of the Methodists, and especially of Lady Huntingdon; he supported Howard, and subscribed to a statue in his honour; he supported the Lancaster system of education, though Lancaster was a Dissenter, and was looked upon with disfavour by the

bishops; he encouraged the movement for Sunday-schools. He was sincerely desirous of doing his duty, and deeply attached to his country, although stronger feelings often interfered both with his conscientiousness and with his patriotism.

It is not surprising that a sovereign of whom all this may be truly said should have obtained much respect and admiration; and it must be added that, in his hatred of innovation and in his vehement anti-American, anti-Catholic, and anti-Gallican feelings, he represented the sentiments of large sections—perhaps of the majority—of his people. The party which he drew from its depression has naturally revered his memory, and old age, and blindness, and deafness, and deprivation of reason, and the base ingratitude of two sons, have cast a deep pathos over his closing years.

All these things have contributed very naturally to throw a delusive veil over the political errors of a sovereign of whom it may be said, without exaggeration, that he inflicted more profound and enduring injuries upon his country than any other modern English king. Ignorant, narrow-minded, and arbitrary, with an unbounded confidence in his own judgment and an extravagant estimate of his prerogative, resolved at all hazards to compel his ministers to adopt his own views, or to undermine them if they refused, he spent a long life in obstinately resisting measures which are now almost universally admitted to have been good, and in supporting measures which are as universally admitted to have been bad. He espoused with passionate eagerness the American quarrel; resisted obstinately the measures of conciliation by which at one time it might easily have been stifled; envenomed it by his glaring partisanship, and protracted it for several years, in opposition to the wish and to the advice even of his own favourite and

responsible minister. He took the warmest personal interest in the attempts that were made, in the matter of general warrants, to menace the liberty of the subject, and in the case of the Middlesex election to abridge the electoral rights of constituencies, and in the other paltry, violent, and arbitrary measures by which the country was inflamed and Wilkes was converted into a hero. The last instance of an English officer deprived of his regiment for his vote in Parliament was due to the personal intervention of the King; and the ministers whom he most warmly favoured were guilty of an amount and audacity of corruption which is probably unequalled in the parliamentary history of England. All the measures that were carried or attempted with the object of purifying the representative body—the publication of debates, the alteration of the mode of trying contested elections, the reduction of sinecures and pensions, the enlargement of the constituencies—were contrary to the wishes of the King. Although his income during the greater part of his reign was little less than a million a year,[1] although his Court was parsimonious to a fault, and his hospitality exceedingly restricted, and although he succeeded to a considerable sum that had been saved by his predecessor, he accumulated in the course of his reign debts to the amount of no less than 3,398,061*l.*;[2] and there can be little doubt that contemporary public opinion was right in attributing a great part of these debts to corrupt expenditure in parliament or at elections. Of all the portions of the Empire none was so impoverished, distracted, and misgoverned as Ireland, but every attempt to improve its condition found in the King a bitter adversary. He opposed the relaxation of the laws by which Irish commerce

[1] See the calculations in Burke's *Causes of the Present Discontents.*

[2] May's *Const. Hist.* i. 206.

had been crushed, although his own Tory ministers were in favour of it. He opposed Catholic emancipation with a persistent bitterness, although that measure alone could have made the Irish union acceptable to the people, and although his minister had virtually pledged himself to grant it, and by his refusal he consigned the country to a prolonged and disastrous agitation, the effects of which may never disappear. He opposed the endowment of the Catholic clergy, although statesmen of the most various schools concurred in the belief that no other measure would act so beneficially on the social condition of Ireland, or would so effectually tranquillise the minds of its people. He refused to consent to throw open the higher ranks in the army to the Catholics, although that measure had already been conceded to the army in Ireland by the Irish Parliament; and he flung the country into all the agonies of a 'No Popery' dissolution at the very time when a fearful struggle with France was demanding the utmost unanimity, and when thousands of Catholic soldiers were fighting bravely in his cause. In the same spirit he supported the slave trade; he described the Test and Corporation Acts as the palladium of the Constitution, and was inexorably opposed to their abolition, and he created Tory peers in such lavish numbers, and with such an exclusive view to their political subserviency, that he seriously lowered the character and fundamentally altered the tendencies of the House of Lords. In a word, there is scarcely a field of politics in which the hand of the King may not be traced—sometimes in postponing inevitable measures of justice and reform, sometimes in sowing the seeds of enduring evil.

The root, however, of his great errors lay in his determination to restore the royal power to a position wholly different from that which it occupied in the

reign of his predecessor; and this design was in many respects more plausible than is now generally admitted. Every functionary has a natural tendency to magnify his office, and when George III. ascended the throne he found his position as an hereditary constitutional sovereign almost unique in the world. In France, in Spain, in Austria, in the smallest principality in Germany, the sovereign was hardly less absolute than in Russia or Turkey. And the power of the English sovereign had for many years been steadily declining, and the limitations to which he was practically subject went far beyond the mere letter of the law. The time had indeed long passed when Elizabeth directed her Parliaments to abstain from discussing matters of state, and when James I. declared that, 'as it is atheism and blasphemy in a creature to dispute what the Deity may do, so it is presumption and sedition in a subject to dispute what a king may do in the height of his power;' but even after the Revolution, William III. had been a great political power, and Anne, though a weak and foolish woman, had exercised no small amount of personal influence. What the position of the English Sovereign was in the eyes of the English Church was sufficiently shown by the long series of theologians who proclaimed in the most emphatic terms that he possessed a divine right, different, not only in degree but in kind, from that of every other power in the State; that he was the representative or vicegerent of the Deity; that resistance to him was in all cases a sin. The language of English law was less unqualified, but still it painted his authority in very different colours from those which an historian of George I. or of George II. would have used. The 'Commentaries' of Blackstone were not published till George III. had been for some time on the throne; but Bute had obtained a considerable

portion of them in manuscript from the author, for the purpose of instructing the Prince in the principles of the Constitution.[1] 'The King of England,' in the words of Blackstone, 'is not only the chief, but properly the sole magistrate of the nation, all others acting by commission from and in due subordination to him.' 'He may reject what bills, may make what treaties, . . . may pardon what offences he pleases, unless when the Constitution hath expressly, or by evident consequence, laid down some exception or boundary.' He has the sole power of regulating fleets and armies, of manning all forts and other places of strength within the realm, of making war and peace, of conferring honours, offices, and privileges. He governs the kingdom: statesmen, who administer affairs, are only his ministers.[2]

It is not surprising that the contrast between such language and the actual position of George II. during the greater part of his reign should have vividly impressed a young sovereign surrounded by Tory followers, and naturally extremely tenacious of power, or that he should have early resolved to bend all his faculties to the task of emancipating his office from the restrictions that surrounded it. The period of his accession was in some respects exceedingly propitious to his design. Among the causes of the depression of royalty one of the most obvious and important had been the long exclusion from office of that great Tory party which naturally exalts most highly the royal prerogative. It had originally been defended, and perhaps justified, by the Jacobitism of Bolingbroke and of his colleagues; but it had been perpetuated through party motives, and the borough system, assisted by

[1] Adolphus, *Hist. of George III.* i. 12.
[2] *Blackstone*, book i. ch. vii.

royal favour, had enabled a few great Whig families gradually to command the chief power in the State. But with the extinction of Jacobitism the necessity for this exclusion had ceased. Scotland had been completely pacified by the abolition of hereditary jurisdictions; the English Jacobites were shown by the Rebellion of 1745 to be few and insignificant. The animosity against George II. on account of the severities that followed the Rebellion was not extended to his successor. The dislike to a foreign king, which had hitherto been the strongest support, had now become one of the most formidable difficulties of the Jacobites. George III. was English by birth, by education, by character, and by creed. The Pretender was at once a foreigner and a Papist, with few or no English tastes, and sunk, according to common report, in habitual drunkenness.[1] So many years had elapsed since the Act of Settlement that the new dynasty had struck its roots firmly in the soil, and all those large classes who were most attached to the theory of legitimacy were only waiting for the death of George II. to rally around his successor as they had rallied around Anne or around Charles II.

The propriety of breaking down the system of exclusion seemed manifest. The Tory sentiment of the country had long found no adequate expression in the Government. The party which carried with it the

[1] 'The Pretender continues to be perpetually drunk; the other day he forced a Cordelier to drink with him as long as he possibly could. At last the friar made his escape, which the other resented so much that he fired with ball from the window at him. He missed him, but killed a cow that was passing by.' Mr. Stanley to Pitt.—*Grenville Papers*, i. 366. In another letter Stanley says: 'The Pretender's eldest son is drunk as soon as he rises, and is always senselessly so at night, when his servants carry him to bed. He is not thought of even by the exiles.'—*Chatham Corresp.* ii. 128.

genuine sympathies both of the country gentry and of the country clergy had been so discouraged that after the death of Bolingbroke and of the Prince of Wales it was scarcely represented in Parliament, and its political eclipse had been followed by a great increase both of oligarchical influence and of corruption. There was something manifestly unhealthy in the continuance, during many years, of a Government like that of Walpole, which was supported chiefly by a majority of members of nomination boroughs in opposition to the large majority of the county votes; and nothing but the wisdom and moderation with which the Whig party used their ascendency could have repressed serious discontent in the country. Bolingbroke, in works which seem to have suggested the policy of George III., had strongly urged the necessity of disregarding the old party distinctions, and building up the royal authority on their decay. Carteret, after the fall of Walpole, had designed a mixed ministry, in which Tories as well as Whigs could be admitted largely to power. Pitt had long chafed bitterly against the system of government by connection, and it was noticed that although the higher offices in the Government were still occupied exclusively by Whigs, the country party, who had remained sullenly indifferent to preceding Governments, rallied warmly around him, and that in his militia appointments he entirely overlooked the distinction of Whig and Tory.[1]

[1] After his resignation Pitt said: 'He lay under great obligations to many gentlemen who had been of the denomination of Tories, but who during his share of the administration had supported Government upon the principles of Whiggism and of the Revolution.' — Albemarle's *Life of Rockingham*, i. 150. 'The country gentlemen deserted their hounds and their horses, preferring for once their parliamentary duty . . . and displayed their banner for Pitt.'—Glover's *Memoirs*, p. 97; see, too, p. 115. Walpole speaks of Pitt's 'known design of uniting, that was breaking, all parties.'—*Memoirs of George III.* i. 15.

The object of Pitt was to check the corruption that prevailed and to extend the area of patriotic feeling. The object of George III. and of the little group of politicians who surrounded and counselled him was very different, but their means were in some respects the same. In order to estimate their policy it is necessary in the first place to form a clear conception of their aims and methods. It is probable that Burke, in the famous pamphlet in which he described the condition of English politics in the first years of George III., considerably exaggerated the systematic and elaborate character of the plan that was adopted, but its leading features are sufficiently plain. 'Prerogative,' as Horace Walpole said, had once more 'become a fashionable word,'[1] the divine right of kings was once again continually preached from the pulpit, and the Court party never concealed their conviction that the monarchy in the preceding reign had fallen into an essentially false position, and that it should be the first object of the new sovereign to restore it to vigour.

They had, however, no wish to restrict or override the authority of Parliament, or to adopt any means which were not legal and parliamentary. Their favourite cries were abolition of government by party or connection, abolition of corruption at elections, emancipation of the Sovereign from ministerial tyranny. No class of politicians were to be henceforth absolutely excluded, but at the same time no class or connection were to be allowed to dictate their policy to the King. The aristocracy, it was said, had obtained an exaggerated place in the Constitution. A few great families, who had been the leading supporters of the Revolution, who were closely connected by family relationships, by friendship, by long

[1] *Memoirs of George III.* i. 16.

and systematic political co-operation, had come to form a single coherent body possessing so large an amount of borough patronage and such vast and various ramifications of influence, that they were practically the rulers of the country.[1] This phalanx was beyond all things to be broken up. If a great nobleman consented to detach himself from it and to enter into new combinations; if on a change of ministry subordinate officials were content to abandon their leaders and to retain their places, such conduct was to be warmly encouraged. The system of divided administrations which had existed under William and Anne was to be revived. The ministers were to be as much as possible confined to their several departments; they were to be drawn from many different connections and schools of policy, and they were not to be suffered to form a coherent and homogeneous whole.

The relations of the Crown to the ministry were to be changed. For a considerable time the Treasury, the ecclesiastical patronage, the Cornish boroughs, and all the other sources of influence which belonged nominally to the Crown, had been, with few exceptions, at the disposal of the minister, and were employed to strengthen his administration. They were now to be in a great degree withdrawn from his influence, and to be employed in maintaining in Parliament a body of men whose political attachment centred in the King alone, who looked to him alone for promotion, who, though often holding places in the Government, were expected rather to control than to support it, and, if it diverged from the policy

[1] 'During the last two reigns a set of undertakers have farmed the power of the Crown at a price certain; and under colour of making themselves responsible for the whole have taken the sole direction of the royal interest and influence into their own hands and applied it to their own creatures without consulting the Crown or leaving any room for the royal nomination or direction.'—Lord Melcombe to Bute. *Adolphus*, i. 24.

which was personally acceptable to the King, to conspire against it and overthrow it. A Crown influence was thus to be established in Parliament as well as a ministerial influence, and it was hoped that it would turn the balance of parties and accelerate the downfall of any administration which was not favoured by the King.

There were many sources from which 'the King's friends,' as this interest was very invidiously called,[1] might be recruited. Crown and Court patronage was extravagantly redundant, and it was certain in the corrupt condition of Parliament that many politicians would prefer to attach themselves to the permanent source of power rather than to transitory administrations. The popularity of the King strengthened the party. The Tories, who resented their long exclusion from power, and who recognised in the young sovereign a Tory king, supported it in a body; the divisions and jealousies among the Whig nobles made it tolerably certain that some would be soon detached from their old connections and would gather round the new standard, and the personal influence of the Sovereign over the leading politicians was sufficient to secure in most ministries at least one member who was content to draw his inspiration from him alone.

It must be remembered, too, that the conception of the Cabinet as a body of statesmen who were in thorough political agreement, and were jointly responsible for all the measures they proposed, was still in its early stage, and was by no means fully or universally recognised. A great step had been taken towards its attainment on the accession of George I., when the principle was adopted of admitting only the members of a single party into the Government. The administra-

[1] The term 'King's friends,' as a distinction for a particular class of politicians, if not invented, was at least adopted by Bute. See a letter from him (March 25, 1763), —*Grenville Papers*, ii. 32, 33.

tion of Walpole, in unity, discipline, and power, was surpassed by few of the present century. After the downfall of that administration the Whigs defeated the attempt of the King's favourite statesman to mix the Government with Tories, and a joint resignation of the Government in 1746 obliged the King to break finally with Bath and Granville, and admit Pitt to his councils. But, on the other hand, the lax policy of Pelham and the personal weakness of Newcastle had led to great latitude and violent divergences of policy in the Cabinet which they formed. Fox and Hardwicke, in the debates on the Marriage Act, inveighed against one another with the utmost bitterness, though the one was Secretary of State and the other Chancellor in the same Government. Fox and Pitt made their colleagues, Murray, Newcastle, and Robinson, the objects of their constant attacks, and these examples rendered it more easy for the King to carry out his favourite policy of a divided Cabinet.

A very remarkable pamphlet, called 'Seasonable Hints from an Honest Man on the new Reign and the new Parliament,' appeared in 1761, defending the new system of government, and it soon attracted much attention from the fact that it was understood to be the composition of no less a person than Lord Bath, the old rival of Walpole and the old colleague of Carteret.[1] The question, the writer said, for the Sovereign to determine was, 'Whether he is to content himself with the shadow of royalty while a set of undertakers for his business intercept his immediate communication with

[1] Walpole's *George III.* i. 54. Wilkes in private conversations said that the 'distinction which has been supposed to exist between the friends of the King and the friends of the minister originated in the councils of Lord Bath.'—Butler's *Reminiscences*, i. 74. 'This project,' said Burke, 'I have heard was first conceived by some persons in the Court of Frederick Prince of Wales.'—*Thoughts on the Present Discontents.*

his people, and make use of the legal prerogatives of their master to establish the illegal claims of factitious oligarchy.' He complains that 'a cabal of ministers had been allowed to erect themselves into a fourth estate, to check, to control, to influence, nay, to enslave the others;' that it had become usual 'to urge the necessity of the King submitting to give up the management of his affairs and the exclusive disposal of all his employments to some ministers, or set of ministers, who, by uniting together, and backed by their numerous dependants, may be able to carry on the measures of Government;' that 'ministerial combinations to engross power and invade the closet,' were nothing less than a 'scheme of putting the Sovereign in leading-strings,' and that their result had been the monstrous corruption of Parliament and the strange spectacle of 'a King of England unable to confer the smallest employment unless on the recommendation and with the consent of his ministers.' He trusts that the new King will put an end to this system by showing 'his resolution to break all factious connections and confederacies.' Already he has 'placed in the most honourable stations near his own person, some who have not surely owed their place to ministerial importunity, because they have always opposed ministerial influence,' and by steadily pursuing this course, the true ideal of the Constitution will be attained, 'in which the ministers will depend on the Crown, not the Crown on the ministers.' But to attain this end it was necessary that the basis of the Government should be widened, the proscription of the Tories abolished, and the Sovereign enabled to select his servants from all sections of politicians. 'Does any candid and intelligent man seriously believe that at this time there subsists any party distinction amongst us that is not merely nominal? Are not the Tories friends of the royal family? Have they not long ago laid aside

their aversion to the Dissenters? Do they not think the Toleration and Establishment both necessary parts of the Constitution? and can a Whig distinguish these from his own principles?' One glorious result of the new system of government the writer confidently predicts. With the destruction of oligarchical power the reign of corruption would terminate, and undue influence in Parliament was never likely to be revived.

The young King came to the throne when rather more than three years of almost uninterrupted victory had raised England to an ascendency which she had scarcely attained since the great days of Henry V. The French flag had nearly disappeared from the sea. Except Louisiana, all the French possessions in North America, except St. Domingo, all the French islands in the West Indies, had been taken, and the last French settlements in Hindostan were just tottering to their fall. The wave of invasion which threatened to submerge Hanover had been triumphantly rolled back, and the nation, intoxicated by victory, and roused from its long lethargy by the genius of its great statesman, displayed an energy and a daring which made it a wonder to its neighbours and to itself. No sacrifice seemed too great to demand, yet in spite of every sacrifice, commerce was flourishing and national prosperity advancing. The sudden growth of the colonial empire of England, and the destruction of her most formidable rival on the sea, had an immediate effect, and it was computed that in 1761 English commerce was a fifth greater than in the last year of the preceding peace.[1]

A ministry which had achieved such triumphs, and which was supported by such a tide of popular favour, would have been able, had it been cordially united, to defy any attempt to subvert it. But it was divided by

[1] Burke, *Observations on the State of the Nation.*

deep fissures, distracted by bitter jealousies and animosities. Its war policy had hitherto been directed absolutely by Pitt, who almost monopolised the popular enthusiasm, and who could count in the Cabinet upon the firm alliance of his brother-in-law Lord Temple, the head of the Grenvilles. The great wealth and position of Temple had given him some political weight, and he was usually entrusted with the defence of the policy of Pitt in the Lords; but his character, at once grasping, arrogant, and intriguing, seldom failed to alienate those with whom he co-operated. With this exception, Pitt had scarcely a cordial friend in the Cabinet. Personal jealousies and rivalry, real differences of opinion, but above all the unbounded arrogance with which Pitt treated his colleagues, had raised against him a weight of animosity which it needed all his genius, popularity, and success to repress. In the council the other ministers cowered like timid schoolboys before him. More than once, when doubts were expressed whether the Treasury would be able to furnish with sufficient celerity or in sufficient quantity the necessary supplies for the expeditions that were prepared, Pitt cut short the debate by declaring that in case of the smallest failure he would at once impeach the Commissioners of Treasury, or Newcastle himself, before Parliament. He compelled no less a man than Anson to sign orders as First Lord of the Admiralty which he was not allowed even to read, and he constantly gave orders relating to the war, in different departments, without even informing the responsible heads of those departments of his intentions.[1] Newcastle lived in a continual state of mingled terror and resentment. Fox could not forget that he had been once deemed the equal of Pitt, and

[1] See the curious account of Sir G. Colebrooke. Walpole's *Memoirs of George III.* i. 80–82.

that his lucrative post of Paymaster of the Forces was in truth purely subordinate. Lord Granville, the old President of the Council, who had stood in the foremost rank of English politics before Pitt had even entered the House of Commons, could hardly brook the imperious tone of his younger colleague, and a powerful section of the ministry looked with great alarm upon the rapidly increasing debt, and desired at all hazards to bring the war to a speedy conclusion. The Duke of Bedford, who had a large number of personal adherents, strongly maintained this opinion, and predicted nothing but calamities, and his view was warmly supported by the Duke of Devonshire, by Lord Hardwicke, and above all by George Grenville, who, though he had not yet obtained a seat in the Cabinet, was already looked upon as the best man of business in the Government.

The change which had taken place in the spirit of the Court appeared from the very beginning. Bute at once obtained the dignity of Privy Councillor, to which, however, as an old servant of the new Sovereign, he had an undoubted right;[1] and the first royal speech to the Council was composed by the King and Bute without any communication with the responsible ministers of the Crown. The sentences in which it spoke of 'a bloody and expensive war,' and of 'obtaining an honourable and lasting peace,' were justly interpreted as a covert censure upon the great minister who was conducting the war; and it was only after an altercation which lasted for two or three hours that Pitt induced Bute to consent that in the printed copy the former

[1] Walpole says Bute was admitted into the Cabinet (i. 8), but it is, I think, evident that he only means the Privy Council. The same distinction was given at the same time to the Duke of York. Compare Walpole's Letters to Montagu and to Mann, October 28, 1760. *Hist. of the late Minority*, pp. 10, 11. *Adolphus*, i. 11. *Annual Register*, 1760, p. 142.

sentence should be changed into 'an expensive, but just and necessary war,' and that the words 'in concert with our allies' should be inserted after the latter. It was speedily spread abroad from lip to lip that, although the King for the present retained his old ministers, he would not be governed by them as his grandfather was. Bute became the medium of most private communications between the King and the more prominent statesmen, and he was generally understood to be the real centre of power. The necessity of drawing together the divided elements of the ministry was very manifest, and it is said that Pitt invited Newcastle to join with him in a closer union;[1] but the old statesman, who, though he sometimes spoke of resigning office, was in truth as wedded to it as ever, had already turned towards the rising star. Both the King and Bute skilfully flattered Newcastle, and aggravated the jealousy with which he regarded Pitt, and Newcastle, though one of the oldest and most experienced statesmen in England, actually offered to serve under Bute.[2]

It was noticed in the first days of the new reign that the great Jacobite families who had long been absent from Court now crowded the antechamber. Horace Walpole, who was present at the first levee, was favourably struck with the affable behaviour of the King, and its contrast to the half-shy, half-sullen manners of his predecessor.[3] Much scandal, however,

[1] Walpole's *George III.* i. 10, 12.

[2] According to Lord Hardwicke, Bute 'availed himself with much art and finesse of the dissensions between the Duke of Newcastle and Mr. Pitt, and played off one against the other occasionally till he had got rid of the popular minister.'—Rockingham's *Memoirs*, i. 6, 7. See, too, pp. 8–10, and Dodington's *Diary*, Dec. 27, 1760.

[3] 'For the King himself, he seems all goodnature and wishing to satisfy everybody; all his speeches are obliging; I was surprised to find the levee room had lost so entirely the air of the lion's den. This sovereign don't stand in one spot with his eyes fixed royally on the ground and

was caused by the warm reception given to Lord G. Sackville, who was an intimate friend of Bute, but whose conduct at Minden had deeply tarnished his reputation;[1] and much criticism was provoked by a sentence which the King himself inserted in his first speech to Parliament. Queen Anne was believed to have reflected on her predecessor when she described herself, on a similar occasion, as 'entirely English' at heart, and George III. indicated a somewhat similar spirit in the sentence, 'Born and educated in this country, I glory in the name of Briton.' 'What a lustre,' replied the House of Lords, in a strain of almost Oriental servility, 'does it cast upon the name of Briton, when you, Sir, are pleased to esteem it among your glories!'[2] In a different spirit, but with almost equal absurdity, the King was afterwards accused of insulting his English subjects by 'melting down the English name' into that of Briton.[3]

The chief business of the first short session of Parliament was to regulate the civil list and the supplies. The first was fixed at 800,000*l.*, and the second at a little less than twenty millions, and in order to supply what was defective a new duty of 3*d.* a barrel was imposed on beer and ale. One act, however, was accomplished in this session at the recommendation of the King, by which, at the cost of a very small diminution of the prerogative of his successors, he acquired great

dropping bits of German news; he walks about and speaks to everybody. I saw him afterwards on the throne, where he is graceful and genteel, sits with dignity and reads his answers to addresses well.'—Walpole to Montagu, Nov. 13, 1760. See, too, the *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i. 82.

[1] Pitt seems to have especially resented it, and it is said to have been the first cause of his enmity to Bute.—Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne*, i. 232.

[2] *Parl. Hist.* xv. 982–986.

[3] Stephens' *Life of Horne Tooke*, i. 61. Junius talks of the King having 'affectedly renounced the name of Englishman.'—*Letter to the King.*

popularity for himself. The Act of William III. making the judges irremovable, except by the intervention of Parliament, during the lifetime of the King, had effectually checked the gross sycophancy and subserviency that had long disgraced the judicial bench, but it still left it in the power of a new sovereign to remove the judges who had been appointed by his predecessor. Such a power could hardly be defended by any valid argument; it was inconsistent with the spirit of the Act; its legality had been disputed on the death of William by Sir J. Jekyll, and it had been very sparingly exercised.[1] On the accession of George I., Lord Trevor, who was a notorious Jacobite, was removed from the chief justiceship of the King's Bench, and a few minor changes had been recommended by the Chancellor.[2] A judge named Aland was removed by George II., but no change was made by his successor, and the young King recommended the Parliament to provide that the commissions of the judges should no longer expire on the demise of the sovereign. The measure was a wise and liberal, though not a very important one, and, although the concession was made entirely at the expense of his successors, it was accepted in the then state of men's minds as if it were an act of heroic self-sacrifice.

A general election was necessary, by Act of Parliament, within six months of the accession, but before that time several changes were effected. George Grenville, who was known to be conspicuously opposed to the prosecution of the war, obtained a place in the Cabinet. Lord Henley, afterwards Earl of Northington, exchanged the position of Lord Keeper for the fuller dignity of Chancellor. He was a coarse, drunken, and unprincipled lawyer, of no very extraordinary abilities,

---

[1] See Townsend's *Hist. of the House of Commons*, ii. 51.

[2] Campbell's *Lives of the Chancellors*, v. 295, 296.

who had early attached himself to the Leicester House faction, and who, partly through a desire to conciliate that faction, and partly through jealousy of Lord Hardwicke, had been appointed Lord Keeper in the Coalition Ministry of Pitt and Newcastle; but George II. refused to raise him to the House of Lords until the trial of Lord Ferrers, when there was a difficulty in finding a lawyer who would preside as Lord Steward.[1] In the new reign he became one of the most docile and useful agents of the policy of the King. The enterprise of giving Bute high political office was found somewhat difficult, but a characteristic method was adopted. Lord Holdernesse, who, though a man of very insignificant abilities, was a Secretary of State, agreed with Bute, as early as November 1760, to quarrel with his colleagues, and throw up his office in seeming anger.[2] The resignation was for a time deferred; but it was accomplished in March 1761. Lord Holdernesse obtained a pension of 4,000*l.* a year for life, and a reversion of the Cinque Ports, and his place was filled by the favourite. Nearly at the same time, Legge, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had some time before quarrelled with Bute about a Hampshire election, was dismissed with circumstances of great discourtesy, and his place was filled by Lord Barrington—an honest man, but one who adopted and avowed the principle that it was his duty always, except in case of the gravest possible causes of difference, to support the ministers selected by the King, whatever party or connection they belonged to, and whatever might be his opinion of the men and of their measures.[3] He was thus completely identified

[1] He was accused of taking money in private causes from both sides, and availing himself of the information communicated on one side in advocating the opposite. See Walpole's *George III.* i. 240. Junius's *Letters*, 39.

[2] Dodington's *Diary*, Nov. 1760.

[3] See the very curious letters published in the *Life of Barring-*

with the King's friends, and by the wish of the King was kept in office through several successive administrations. The brilliant but versatile and unprincipled Charles Townshend filled his place, and a few other changes were made which, though unimportant in themselves, showed that Tory tendencies, and especially personal devotion to the Sovereign, had become the passports of favour. Notwithstanding the professions of purity that were made by the King's friends, it was noticed that the general election which now took place was one of the most corrupt ever known in England, that large sums were issued by the Treasury, that the King took an active part in naming the candidates, and that the boroughs attached to the Duchy of Cornwall, which had hitherto been at the disposal of the ministry, were now treated as solely at the disposal of the Crown.[1]

It was evident that it was intended, in the first place, to strike down Pitt;[2] and an opportunity soon occurred. The great question now impending was the negotiation for peace. The arguments in favour of terminating a war are always strong, but in this case they had a more than common force. The debt was rapidly increasing, and the estimates had arisen to a most alarming extent. The total sum granted by Parliament for 1761 was more than nineteen millions. The British forces in different parts of the world amounted to no less than 110,000 soldiers and 70,000 seamen, besides 60,000 German auxiliaries in British pay.[3] The success of England had hitherto been al-

---

ton by his brother the Bishop of Durham, pp. 79, 99, 103–105.

[1] Albemarle's *Life of Rockingham*, i. 61–64. Walpole's *Memoirs of George III.* i. 41, 42. Dodington's *Diary*, Feb. 2, 1761.

[2] See on the feeling of Bute towards Pitt a letter of the Duke of Newcastle.—*Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 19.

[3] *Parl. Hist.* xv. 1000–1006.

most unparalleled, but there was now but little left for her to gain, and she had many dangers to fear. She had hitherto been very successful in Germany, but a German war could not fail to be extremely bloody and expensive. The interests of England in it were very subordinate, and as the colonial empire of France was passing away, it was certain that the war would be concentrated chiefly in this quarter. In a continental war the normal strength of France was so great that the chances were much in her favour, and, in the opinion of some good judges, there was much danger lest the King's German dominions should be ultimately absorbed.[1] The Tory party had always looked with great aversion on continental wars, and, as we have seen, there was a strong minority in the Cabinet, including Newcastle and Hardwicke, who were prepared to sacrifice much for a peace.[2] A very able pamphlet, called 'Considerations on the German War,' appeared about this time, and exercised an influence which was probably greater than that of any other English pamphlet since Swift's 'Conduct of the Allies.' Its author was an obscure writer named Mauduit, and it was said to have been published under the countenance of Lord Hardwicke. The writer fully approved of the capture of the French islands, and of the destruction of the naval power of France; but he argued with much force, that no policy could be more manifestly suicidal than to squander larger sums than were expended for the whole land and sea service during the Duke of Marlborough's campaigns, in a German war waged between two great

[1] See *Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 22–29.

[2] In Dodington's *Diary*, Jan. 2, 1761, there is a report of a conversation he had with Bute on the prospects of the peace. Bute said 'the ministry neither were nor could be united; that the Duke of Newcastle most sincerely wished for peace, and would go any length to obtain it; that Mr. Pitt meditated a retreat and would stay in no longer than the war.'

German Powers, for the possession of a remote German province which might belong to either without affecting in any way the real interests of England. The burden of the war was beginning to be seriously felt. In March 1761, when there were rumours of an approaching peace under the superintendence of Pitt, the funds rose four per cent. When the three years' term of service in the militia expired, and a new ballot was about to take place, there were riots in several of the Northern counties. At Hexham, in Northumberland, a body of Yorkshire militia were attacked by six or seven thousand rioters armed with clubs, and a serious struggle ensued, in which forty-two persons were killed and forty-eight others wounded.[1] The expedition against Belleisle caused many murmurs, for it cost much bloodshed, and the island was little more than a barren rock, of no value to England, and at the same time so near the French coast that it was tolerably certain that it would be restored at the peace. The unhealthy quarters to which English conquests had recently extended, made the mortality among the troops very great. Bounties rose to an unexampled height, and there were fears that if the war continued it would be a matter of great difficulty to fill the ranks.[2]

Negotiations for peace had taken place as early as November 1759, and they were resumed in the spring of 1761, but neither party appears to have entered very keenly into them. Pitt had just sent out his expedition against Belleisle, and he was anxious that nothing should be done until it succeeded. He told the King that he by no means thought ill of the state of the war in Germany; that he thought the total destruction of

[1] *Annual Register*, 1761, p. 83. *Chatham Correspondence*, ii. 100, 101. Walpole to Montagu, March 19, 1761. See, too, Adolphus's *Hist. of England*, i. 571, 572.

[2] *Adolphus*, i. 100.

the French power in the East Indies, the probability of taking Martinique as well as Belleisle, and the probable results of the next German campaign, would enable us to secure all Canada, Cape Breton, the neighbouring islands, and the exclusive fishery of Newfoundland, and that he would sign no peace on lower terms. It was quite certain that the French were not prepared to accede to such terms, and both the King and Newcastle strongly remonstrated against the determination of Pitt to lay them down as indispensable at the very outset of the negotiations.[1] On the French side, also, new prospects were opening out which produced an equal hesitation. Charles III., who had very recently exchanged the throne of Naples for that of Spain, still remembered with bitterness how the English had threatened to bombard Naples in 1742. He looked forward with great dread to the complete naval supremacy which England was rapidly attaining; he inherited the old Spanish grievances against England about Gibraltar and the trade of the Indies; he was closely connected with the French sovereign, and he also saw a prospect of obtaining in Portugal conquests of great value at little cost. These various considerations were rapidly drawing him into closer alliance with France.[2] Belleisle was captured by the English on June 7, 1761. On the 15th of the following month, the French negotiator took the very significant and very startling step of presenting a memorial in behalf of Spain, claiming the restitution of some prizes bearing the Spanish flag which had been taken by the English, the right of the Spaniards to fish upon the banks of Newfoundland, and

[1] See the letter of Newcastle to Lord Hardwicke, April 15, 1761. Albemarle's *Life of Rockingham*, i. 23, 24.

[2] The earlier stages of this negotiation may be traced in the letters between Grimaldi and Fuentes, the Spanish ambassadors at Paris and London, in Jan., Feb. and March 1761. *Chatham Correspondence*, vol. ii.

the demolition of the English settlements on the disputed territory in the Bay of Honduras.[1]

Such demands, made by a Power with which England was at perfect peace, through the intervention of a Power with which England was at war, could have but one meaning, and Pitt loftily expressed to the French agent his opinion of the transaction. 'His Majesty,' he answered, 'will not suffer the dispute with Spain to be blended in any manner whatever in the negotiations of peace between the two Crowns, and it will be considered as an affront to his Majesty's dignity, and as a thing incompatible with the sincerity of the negotiations, to make further mention of such a circumstance. Moreover, it is expected that France will not at any time presume a right of intermeddling with such disputes between England and Spain.' The rupture of the negotiations between France and England soon followed. It is not necessary to examine the proceedings in great detail; it is sufficient to say that Pitt was prepared to purchase the restitution of Minorca by restoring Belleisle, Guadaloupe, and Marie-Galante to the French, and that he consented to a partition of the Antilla Isles; but he maintained that England should retain all the other conquests. He refused the French demands for a participation in the fisheries of Newfoundland, for the cession of Cape Breton in America, for the restoration of either Goree or Senegal as a depôt for the French slave trade in the West Indies, and for the re-establishment in Hindostan of the frontier of 1755. He refused equally the demand for the restoration of prizes made before the declaration of war, and he insisted, in the interest of the King of Prussia, that the French should withdraw their armies

[1] See the official documents on the subject in *Parl. Hist.* xv. There is a good epitome in De Flassan's *Hist. de la Diplomatie Française.*

from Germany, while England still retained her right of assisting her ally.[1]

The spell of success which had so long hung over the British arms was still unbroken. The capture of Belleisle in June 1761; the capture of Dominica, by Lord Rollo, in the same month; the tidings of new successes in Hindostan, and a victory of Prince Ferdinand at Vellinghausen in July, contributed to raise the spirits of the country, and formed the best defence of the demands of Pitt. Nor is there any reason to doubt that he sincerely desired peace, if he could have obtained it on terms which he deemed adequate.[2] The alliance, however, between France and Spain was rapidly consummated. On August 15, 1761, the family compact between the French and Spanish kings was signed, binding the two countries in a strict offensive and defensive alliance, and making each country guarantee the possessions of the other. Mr. Stanley, the vigilant English agent who had been negotiating in Paris, obtained secret knowledge of one of the articles, and confidential communications from other quarters corroborated the account.[3] Pitt, who had for some time watched with great suspicion the armaments of Spain, perceived clearly that the declaration of war was only delayed till the naval preparations of Spain were

---

[1] *Adolphus*, i. 36–40. *De Flassan*, v. 382–388. A curious picture of the debates in the Cabinet, and of the imperative manner in which Pitt silenced all opposition, will be found in the letters of Newcastle to Hardwicke in Albemarle's *Life of Rockingham*, vol. i.

[2] It is remarkable that Jenkinson, who was one of the most uncompromising adherents of Bute, had no doubt of this. He wrote (Aug. 6, 1761): 'The Duke of Newcastle has already been with Lord Bute to beg that we may not lose sight of peace; and take my word for it, Mr. Pitt is almost as unwilling, though he is too wise to show it.'—*Grenville Papers*, i. 382.

[3] Compare Walpole's *George III.* i. 123, 124. *Adolphus*, i. 41–45. *Chatham Correspondence*, ii. 140, 141.

completed and the treasure-ships which were expected from Mexico and Peru had arrived safely in port. He acted with characteristic promptitude and decision. Spain had committed no overt act which could be reasonably taken as a pretext for war. The evidence of the family compact was somewhat doubtful, and, being derived exclusively from secret information, it could not be publicly produced. The Spanish Government loudly disclaimed all hostile intentions, and asserted that the ships of war which were building in the Spanish arsenals were only such as were required for convoying merchant vessels from Naples to Spain and repressing the Barbary pirates. Pitt, however, was prepared to take the responsibility of a war which it was very difficult to justify to the world, and he resolved to strike, and to strike at once. Expeditions were speedily planned against the most assailable parts of the Spanish dominions, and on September 18 a cabinet council was held in which Pitt proposed to his colleagues the immediate withdrawal of the English ambassador from Madrid, and a declaration of war against Spain based upon the warlike demands she had made through the intervention of the French negotiator in the preceding July.[1]

Frederick the Great afterwards expressed in warm terms his admiration for the sagacity and enterprise displayed by Pitt in this conjuncture, and the event showed that the policy of the great minister was as wise as it was daring. It must be owned, however, that modern public opinion would have seldom acquiesced in a war the avowed and known reasons of which were so plainly inadequate, and it was probably by no means only a desire to expel Pitt from the ministry

[1] See *Grenville Papers*, i. 386–7. *Chatham Correspondence*, ii. 140–143. *Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 46–49.

that actuated those who rejected his advice. The King was strongly opposed to the policy of Pitt and much irritated by his conduct.[1] In three successive cabinet councils the question was debated, and in the last Pitt, finding himself supported by no one but Lord Temple, rose with great warmth, declaring that 'he was called to the ministry by the voice of the people, to whom he considered himself accountable for his conduct, and he would not remain in a situation which made him responsible for measures he was no longer allowed to guide.' He was answered by old Lord Granville, the President of the Council, who made himself the representative of the majority, and who exhibited on this occasion one last flash of his old fire. 'I can hardly,' he said, 'regret the right honourable gentleman's determination to leave us, as he would otherwise have compelled us to leave him; but if he be resolved to assume the right of advising his Majesty and directing the operations of the war, to what purpose are we called to this council? When he talks of being responsible to the people, he talks the language of the House of Commons and forgets that at this board he is only responsible to the King. However, though he may possibly have convinced himself of his infallibility, still it remains that we should be equally convinced before we can resign our understandings to his direction and join with him in the measures he proposes.' Pitt and Temple persisted in their determination, and on October 5, 1761, they placed their resignations in the hands of the King.[2]

[1] Sept. 23, 1761. Newcastle wrote to Hardwicke: 'The King seemed so provoked and so weary that his Majesty was inclined to put an end at all events to the uncertainty about Mr. Pitt.' Sept. 26, he writes: 'The King seems every day more offended with Mr. Pitt, and plainly wants to get rid of him at all events.'—Albemarle's *Life of Rockingham*, i. 42, 44. See, too, *Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 48.

[2] *Adolphus*, i. 43, 44. *Hist. of the late Minority*, pp. 33–37. *Annual Register*, 1761. Mr. Bal-

So ended an administration which had found England in a condition of the lowest depression, and by the efforts of a single man had raised her to a height of glory scarcely equalled in her annals. It is true, indeed, that with the exception of James Grenville, who resigned the insignificant post of Cofferer, no other official accompanied Pitt and Temple into retirement, but with Pitt the soul of the administration had passed away. As Burke truly said, 'No man was ever better fitted to be the minister of a great and powerful nation, or better qualified to carry that power and greatness to their utmost limits. . . . With very little parliamentary, and with less Court influence, he swayed both at Court and in Parliament with an authority unknown before, and under him, for the first time, administration and popularity were united.' The seals of Secretary of State were offered to George Grenville, but he refused them, though accepting the leadership of the House of Commons, and they were then given to Lord Egremont, an avowed Tory, and son of Sir W. Windham, the Tory leader in the last reign.[1] The Duke of Bedford soon after replaced Temple as Privy Seal.

So far the policy of the secret counsellors of the young King had been brilliantly successful. In less than twelve months, and in the midst of the war, the greatest war minister England had ever produced was overthrown, and the party with which the King personally sympathised had become the most powerful in the State. But grave dangers still hung around the Court, and no one was more conscious of them than Bute. 'Indeed, my good Lord,' he wrote in answer to the congratulations of Lord Melcombe, 'my situation, at all times perilous, is become much more so, for I am

---

lantyne, however, in his Life of Carteret, has given (pp. 359–361) some reason for questioning whether the speech of Lord Granville was correctly reported.

[1] *Grenville Papers*, i. 411, 412.

no stranger to the language held in this great city; "our darling's resignation is owing to Lord Bute . . . and he must answer for all the consequences;" which is in other words for the miscarriage of another's system that he himself could not have prevented.'[1] Newcastle, on the other hand, was filled with a delight which he took little pains to conceal,[2] and he wrote triumphantly that according to information just received from the ambassador at Madrid, Wall had expressed his concern and surprise at the idle reports that Spain was to come to a rupture with England, and had assured Lord Bristol that there never was a time when the King of Spain wished more to have the most perfect friendship with the King of Great Britain than at present. 'This,' adds the Duke, 'seems a flat contradiction to all Mr. Pitt's late suppositions and assertions.'[3]

It was inevitable that a statesman passing out of office after rendering such services as those of Pitt should have great offers pressed upon him, and every motive both of gratitude and policy urged the King and Bute not to depart from the custom. It was of the utmost importance, if possible, to conciliate Pitt, or at all events to diminish his popularity and withhold him from systematic opposition. He was offered and he refused the Duchy of Lancaster. He was offered and he refused the Governor-Generalship of Canada, without the obligation of residence and with a salary of 5,000*l.* a year;[4] but he accepted the title of Baroness of Chatham for his wife, and a pension of 3,000*l.* a year for three lives, for himself. Contrary to all custom, these rewards were announced in the very Gazette that announced his resignation, and they produced a sudden

[1] *Adolphus*, i. 572.
[2] Walpole's *George III.* i. 82
[3] *Bedford Corr.* iii. 49, 50.
[4] *Chatham Corresp.* ii. 147, 148. Harris's *Life of Hardwicke*, iii. 258, 259.

and most violent revulsion of feeling. On an impartial consideration this revulsion will appear not a little unreasonable. Though divided from his colleagues on a single question, Pitt had no wish to enter into permanent opposition, and had he refused all favours from the Crown, such an intention would have been undoubtedly ascribed to him. No rewards were ever more amply earned, and the pension was smaller in amount than that which had just been bestowed upon Lord Holdernesse for his resignation. In English public life it is scarcely possible for anyone who does not possess independent means to take a prominent part out of office, and Pitt had not yet received the legacy of Sir William Pynsent which raised him to comparative wealth. He had, however, been accustomed to use a language about pensioners, and to talk in a strain of high-flown and heroic disinterestedness, not quite in harmony with his conduct, and a storm of indignation and obloquy was easily aroused. Writers connected with the Court party were the foremost in lampooning him, and the extreme bitterness with which Horace Walpole and Gray spoke of his conduct[1] is sufficient to show that the feeling was not confined to the mob. Pitt also exhibited at this time one of those strange fits of humility and extravagant deference to royalty to which he was liable. He burst into tears at a few civil words from the young King, exclaiming, 'I confess, Sir, I had but too much reason to expect your Majesty's displeasure; I did not come prepared

[1] See for Walpole's opinions his letters to the Countess of Ailesbury, Oct. 10, 1761, and to Conway, Oct. 12, 1761. Gray wrote at the same time: 'Oh that foolishest of great men, that sold his inestimable diamond for a paltry peerage and pension! The very night it happened was I swearing it was a d——d lie and never would be; but it was for want of reading Thomas à Kempis, who knew mankind so much better than I.'—*Works*, iii. 265.

for this exceeding goodness. Pardon me, Sir; it overpowers, it oppresses me.'[1] His letters to Bute acknowledging the kindness of the King were couched in a strain of florid, fulsome, almost servile humility, lamentably unworthy of a great statesman.[2]

For a short time it appeared as if the popularity of Pitt were eclipsed, and as if the torrent of popular indignation which was so greatly feared had been turned against the fallen statesman. It was also a fortunate circumstance for the Court party that the resignation took place at a time when the recent marriage of the King with the Princess of Mecklenburg Strelitz, and the gorgeous ceremonies of the wedding and of the coronation, had to some extent stimulated anew that sentiment of loyalty which was already beginning to fade.[3]

But the exultation of the ministers was very short-lived. A few days of reflection and a brief and dignified letter written to the Town Clerk of London restored the popularity of Pitt, and a speedy reaction set in. Addresses congratulating him on his conduct poured in from many of the chief towns. The City of London, which had long been his chief supporter, after a momentary hesitation remained firm to its allegiance. The Common Council passed a vote of thanks to him five weeks after his resignation. On the occasion of the Lord Mayor's day, the King and Queen went in state to dine at the Guildhall, and Temple induced Pitt to take the injudicious and unbecoming step of joining the procession. The result was what had probably been predicted. The populace received the King and Queen with contemptuous indifference, Bute with an

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, ii. 147.

[2] Ibid. ii. 149–152.

[3] 'Mr. Pitt himself,' wrote Walpole, Sept. 9, 1761, 'would be mobbed if he talked of anything but clothes and diamonds and bridesmaids.'—Walpole to Mann.

outburst of insult, and Pitt with the most enthusiastic applause. In Parliament he was assailed with disgraceful virulence by Colonel Barré, a partisan of Shelburne who was then 'devoted to Lord Bute,'[1] but although it was noticed that Barré was immediately after received with special favour at Court,[2] both Parliament and the public were disgusted with the ferocity and the scurrility he displayed. Events soon justified the sagacity of Pitt. No sooner had he retired from office than the Spanish Court threw aside the mask, and the conciliatory language they had hitherto employed was exchanged for a tone of haughty menace. The treasure-ships which Pitt had wished to intercept arrived safely in Spain. Military preparations were pressed on without disguise. The alliance between France and Spain was openly avowed, but the Spanish Government haughtily refused to state its character and its conditions. Wall propounded a long series of grievances against England, and declared that Spain would no longer suffer France 'to run the risk of receiving such rigid laws as were prescribed by an insulting victor.' On December 10, 1761, the English Government, having vainly demanded a promise that the Spanish king would not join in hostilities against England, recalled their ambassador from Madrid. On

[1] This was Shelburne's own expression. See Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne*, i. 120.

[2] See the statement of Barré himself in a letter to Shelburne.—Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne*, i. 126. Walpole's *George III.* i. 122. Barré had served with Wolfe, and he had written to Pitt shortly before his attack upon him, in a strain of warm admiration, asking for a promotion. Pitt had refused the request on the ground that senior officers would be injured by the promotion, and Barré in a letter to Pitt described himself as 'bound in the highest gratitude for the attention he had received.'—Chatham's *Corresp.* ii. 41–43, 171. A graphic account of the manner in which Pitt was attacked in this debate will be found in a letter of Mr. Noel Milbanke to Rockingham.—*Life of Rockingham*, i. 79–83.

the 31st, war was declared against Spain, and very soon after, one of the secret motives of the Spanish policy was disclosed. Portugal was on friendly terms with England, but she had been perfectly neutral during the struggle, and had given no kind of provocation to her neighbours. Without even a colourable pretext for hostility, Spanish armies were now massed on the Portuguese frontier, and in March the Spanish ambassador and the French plenipotentiary presented a joint and peremptory memorial to the Portuguese king, ordering him at once to break off all correspondence and commerce with England, and to join France and Spain in the war that was waging. The insolent demand was refused. War was declared, and a Spanish army was soon desolating the plains of Portugal.

But the hand of the great English minister, though withdrawn from the helm, was still felt in every department of the war. The perfection to which he had brought every branch of the military and naval service, the spirit of emulation and enterprise he had breathed into them, the discernment with which he had selected the commanders for the most arduous posts, were all still felt, and victory after victory crowned the British arms. In February 1762, the important island of Martinique was taken from the French, and the conquest was followed by that of the dependent isles of Grenada, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent, leaving the English sole possessors of all the Caribbean Islands, extending from the eastern point of Hispaniola nearly to the continent of South America. Another and still greater conquest speedily followed. Among the designs of Pitt one of the most important was the conquest of Havannah, the richest and most important town in Cuba. Its harbour was one of the best in the world. It was the centre of the whole trade of the Spanish

West Indies, and it was defended by strong fortifications and by a powerful fleet. The siege—which was conducted with signal skill and daring—lasted for two months and eight days. On August 14, 1762, Havannah fell, nine noble ships of the line and four frigates were taken, five others were destroyed during the siege or in the docks, and the treasure taken is said to have amounted to not less than three millions sterling.[1] On September 21 a formidable French attack on Brückenmühle was repelled with great loss to the assailants by a German and English army under Prince Ferdinand and the Marquis of Granby. On October 6 Manilla, with the Philippine Islands, was conquered by Sir W. Draper, and among the Spanish galleons taken at sea was one which contained a treasure valued at little less than a million. In Portugal the Spanish army was at first successful, but it was soon checked by the assistance of English and Hanoverians under General Burgoyne, and the Spanish were compelled to evacuate Estramadura. The only serious reverses were the capture by the Spaniards of the Portuguese settlement of Sacramento, on the Rio de la Plata, and the capture by the French of Fort St. John, in Newfoundland, from which, however, three months later they were easily expelled.

A campaign which was on the whole so brilliant would naturally have raised the reputation of the ministry that conducted it; but in this case every success was mainly attributed to Pitt, and was regarded as a justification of his wisdom and as a condemnation of his enemies. It was known that the war with Spain was his policy; that he had sent out the expedition against Martinique; that its success was mainly due

[1] *Annual Register*, 1762. See, too, *Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 130.

to the troops his victories had liberated in America; that he had planned the conquest of Havannah; that if his counsels had been adopted, the number of rich Spanish prizes that were brought into English harbours would have been greatly increased. Without the ministry, discontent was gathering fast, and within there was jealousy or division. Grenville, though still acting with docility the part of leader of the House of Commons, was not suffered to have any voice in the secret corruption which was one of the most important functions usually attached to his post.[1] Newcastle, in the first exultation that followed the resignation of Pitt, had anticipated a renewal of his ascendency, but he soon learned how greatly he had miscalculated. Although First Lord of the Treasury, he found that he was powerless in the Government. Even his own subordinates at the Treasury Bench are said to have been instructed to slight him. The most important political steps were taken without consulting him. Cabinet councils were summoned without any notice of the subject for discussion being given him. The King made no less than seven peers without even informing Newcastle of his intention. Neither his age, his rank, his position in the ministry, nor his eminent services to the dynasty, could save him from marked coldness on the part of the King, from contemptuous discourtesy and studied insults on the part of the favourite.[2] The situation soon became intolerable, and when Bute announced his intention of withdrawing the subsidy

[1] See his complaint of the difficulty he had 'to carry on the business of the House of Commons without being authorised to talk to the members of that House upon their several claims and pretensions.'—*Grenville Papers*, i. 483.

[2] See the letters of Newcastle to Hardwicke, Albemarle's *Life of Rockingham*, i. 102–112; and his letter to Bedford, *Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 79, 80. Walpole's *Memoirs of George III.* i. 156. Harris's *Life of Lord Hardwicke*, iii. 230, 273, 274.

which England paid to the King of Prussia, Newcastle refused to consent. In May 1762 the old statesman resigned, refusing with some dignity a pension that was offered him for the purpose of recruiting a fortune which had been wrecked in the public service.[1] Bute then became in name, what since the resignation of Pitt he had been in reality, the head of the ministry, and Grenville became Secretary of State in his stead.

The Whig party, which had so long been in power, was now put to the test, and the weakness of many of its members was exposed. George Grenville, one of the most rising of its statesmen, and the Duke of Bedford, the head of one of its greatest families, had already gone over to Bute, and a long train of the personal adherents of Newcastle soon followed the example. The bishops led the way. Newcastle had always been especially careful to monopolise the ecclesiastical patronage, and it was said that there was not a single bishop on the bench whom he had not either appointed or translated. In the season of his prosperity they had thronged his hall with an assiduity that sometimes provoked a smile, but it was observed that only a single bishop was present at his farewell levee.[2]

---

[1] His private fortune is said to have been reduced from 25,000*l.* to 6,000*l.* a year by his long tenure of office.—Harris's *Life of Hardwicke*, iii. 280.

[2] Cornwallis, Bishop of Lichfield. The Bishop of Norwich, however, who was then absent from London, remained staunch to his benefactor. See, on the ingratitude of the bishops, Harris's *Life of Hardwicke*, iii. 334. Walpole's *Memoirs of George III.* i. 169, 170. Walpole to Montagu, May 25, 1762. Newcastle is said on this occasion to have made a very happy witticism which is often ascribed to Lord Melbourne. Mrs. Montagu writes: 'The Duke of Newcastle after his resignation had a very numerous levee, but somebody observed to him that there were but two bishops present. He is said to have replied that bishops, like other men, were too apt to forget their maker. I think this has been said for him, or the resignation of power has much brightened his understanding;

But the most important of all the accessions to the party of Bute was Fox, the old rival of Pitt, in whose favour Grenville was displaced from the leadership of the Commons, who, in consideration of the promise of a peerage, undertook to carry the peace, and who, having vainly attempted to draw the Duke of Cumberland and other great Whig peers into the same connection, threw himself, with all the impetuosity of his fearless and unscrupulous nature, into the service of the Court.

The main object of the party since the downfall of Pitt had been to press on the peace. For many months Bute, without the knowledge of any of the responsible ministers of the Crown, carried on a secret negotiation through the mediation of the Sardinian ambassador, Count Viri,[1] and when it had arrived at some maturity it was finally entrusted to the Duke of Bedford, who had for a long time identified himself with the extreme peace party. His letters give a vivid picture of the feelings of a section of the Government. Thus in June 1761, while Pitt was still minister, we find him deploring bitterly the expedition against Belleisle, and urging that 'if we retain the greatest part of our conquests out of Europe we shall be in danger of over-colonising and undoing ourselves by them as the Spaniards have done.'[2] In July he predicted the failure of the projected expedition against Martinique, and the speedy conquest of the King's electoral dominions by the French.[3] He argued that to deprive the French of the Newfoundland fishery would be to ruin their naval power, and would unite all the other

---

for of whatever he was accused, the crime of wit was never laid to his charge.'—Doran's *Life of Mrs. Montagu*, p. 120.

[1] See Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne*, i. 137.

[2] *Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 17.

[3] Ibid. pp. 23–29.

naval Powers against us, as aiming at a naval monopoly 'at least as dangerous to the liberties of Europe as that of Lewis XIV.;'[1] and with the exception of a slight reservation on the article of Dunkirk, he advocated the unqualified acceptance of every one of the French demands in the abortive negotiation I have described.[2] It is remarkable that Bute at this time remonstrated strongly against this spirit of absolute concession, and enumerated conditions very little different from those of Pitt, as essential to the honour and safety of England.[3] In August, Rigby, the confidential follower of Bedford, wrote to him: 'While we succeed . . . the fire is kept constantly fanned. For my own part I am so convinced of the destruction which must follow the continuance of the war, that I should not be sorry to hear that Martinico or the next windmill you attack should get the better of you.'[4] Lord Shelburne, who was deeply mixed with the intrigues of this evil time, advocated in December 1761, in the House of Lords, the withdrawal of all English troops from Germany, and the complete abandonment of Frederick; and at the beginning of February 1762, Bedford, though now Privy Seal and an active member of the Cabinet, brought forward in the House of Lords a resolution to the same effect, without the consent of any of his colleagues, and he was defeated by Bute, who carried the previous question by 105 to 16.[5]

It is obvious that such a statesman was peculiarly unfit to carry on the negotiation, and he was a man of

---

[1] *Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 26.

[2] Ibid. p. 28.

[3] Ibid. pp. 30–34. *Grenville Papers*, i. 376.

[4] *Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 43.

[5] *Cavendish Debates*, i. 568–575. *Parl. Hist.* xv. 1217–1221. *Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 73. Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne*, i. 123, 124.

very little ability, and of a very haughty and unaccommodating temper. His personal honour, which was afterwards malignantly attacked, appears to have been quite unblemished, and on one important question that was raised, relating to the frontier in Hindostan, he asserted the British claims with energy and effect;[1] but he entered upon the negotiation with the strongest desire to succeed at any sacrifice; he showed this spirit so clearly that the ministers thought it necessary to impose considerable restrictions on his powers;[2] and it may easily be gathered from his correspondence that he desired Havannah, though perhaps the richest of all the conquests of the war, to be restored to Spain without any substantial compensation being exacted.[3]

The points of resemblance between the Peace of Paris and the Peace of Utrecht are so many and so obvious that it is impossible to overlook them. In both cases a war of extraordinary success was ended by a peace which was very advantageous, but which in many of its terms was greatly inferior to what might reasonably have been demanded. In both cases the peace was forced through Parliament amid a storm of unpopularity and by corruption and intimidation of the worst kind. In both cases the strange spectacle was exhibited of English ministers looking with positive alarm or dismay on some of the greatest successes that crowned their arms, and in both cases the extreme longing for peace was mainly due to party motives, and especially to the desire of excluding from power a great man who was pre-eminently fitted to conduct a war. It cannot, however, be justly said of the Peace of Paris that England

---

[1] *Bedford Correspondence*, iii. xxiii.

[2] Ibid. pp. 114–119, 126–129.

[3] Ibid. pp. 118, 119, 136–138. Lord Barrington, also, was of opinion that no compensation should be asked for the restoration of Havannah.—Barrington's *Life of Barrington*, p. 82.

purchased, as she had done under Queen Anne, great advantages for herself at the cost of her allies. Portugal was restored to everything she had lost by the war, and although Frederick the Great had some real reason to complain of England, her conduct to him was far short of the desertion which has been alleged. The wars between Prussia and Austria, and the wars between England and France, were in their origin entirely distinct, and although it afterwards suited the purpose of England to assist Frederick, as France was assisting Austria, the connection was of a purely casual and interested character. No stipulation bound England to continue indefinitely her subsidy to Prussia, and in April 1762, when the Government announced their intention of withdrawing it, they were perfectly justified in doing so.[1] England had just entered into a new war with Spain, and the necessity of repelling the Spanish invasion of Portugal rendered it peculiarly costly. On the other hand, the death of the Czarina Elizabeth on January 5, 1762, had placed on the throne of Russia a passionate admirer of Frederick. Peace between the two crowns at once ensued. For the few months during which Peter the Third reigned, there was even an alliance between Russia and Prussia, and an armistice and then a peace between Prussia and Sweden speedily followed. The great confederation against Prussia was in this manner dissolved. France and Austria alone remained opposed to her; and although England by the Peace of Paris engaged no longer to assist her ally, she stipulated that France should also withdraw from the war, and should evacuate the territory and strong places she had occupied. It is true, however, that in the course of the negotiations there were some things of which

[1] See Bute's own defence in a despatch to Mitchell, the English Minister to Frederick (May 26, 1762). Bisset's *Life of Sir A. Mitchell*, ii. 294–302.

Frederick had real reason to complain. By a strange and significant omission, the article compelling the French to cede the territory and strong places they had taken, did not specify the Power to which they were to be ceded.[1] Bute is said to have even declared in Parliament that they were 'to be scrambled for;'[2] and but for the promptitude of the Prussian king, they would have fallen into Austrian hands. It is certain that in January 1762 some secret overtures were made by Bute to the Queen of Hungary without the knowledge of Frederick, and two charges of bad faith of the worst description were brought against the English minister. It was alleged that in order to induce Austria to consent to an early peace, he held out hopes that England would use her influence to obtain for Austria territorial compensations from Prussia, and that with the same view, after the death of the Czarina, Bute had urged upon Prince Galitzin, the Russian ambassador in London, the necessity of Russia remaining firm to the Austrian alliance, maintaining her army in the Prussian territory, and thus compelling Frederick to make large concessions to Vienna. These charges were fully believed by Frederick, and the latter rests on the authority of Prince Galitzin himself; but Bute positively asserted that they were untrue, and that his language in conversation had been grossly misunderstood or misrepresented.[3]

As far as England was concerned, the provisions of the treaty with France differed but little from those which had been rejected by Pitt in 1761. Minorca was

---

[1] Carlyle's *Frederick*, book xx. ch. xiii. Thackeray's *Life of Chatham*, ii. 22.

[2] *Anecdotes of Chatham*, i. 401.

[3] Compare Frederick, *Œuvres Posthumes*, iv. 290–292. Bisset's *Memoirs of Sir Andrew Mitchell*, ii. 206–302. *History of the late Minority*, pp. 52–54. Adolphus' *Hist. of England*, i. 76–81; and especially the letters in the appendix, pp. 579–589.

restored by the French, and England retained possession of all Canada, Nova Scotia, and Cape Breton, of Senegal, Grenada, and the Grenadines, and of the three neutral islands, St. Vincent, Dominica, and Tobago. The French, however, secured the right of fishing on the coast of Newfoundland, and also in the Gulf of St. Lawrence at a distance of three leagues from the shore, and two small islands were ceded to them as a shelter for their fishermen. England restored Goree, which was deemed essential to the French slave-trade. She restored the islands of Guadaloupe, Marie-Galante, De la Désirade, Martinique, Belleisle, and San Lucia, and in Hindostan there was a mutual restoration of conquests made since 1749. The French were, however, forbidden to erect fortifications or to keep troops in Bengal; they were compelled to acknowledge the English candidates as Nabob of the Carnatic and Surbah of the Deccan, and they undertook to reduce Dunkirk to the same condition as before the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle.

Spain by the treaty of Paris ceded to England the province of Florida, with some adjoining territory to the east and south-east of the Mississippi, but she was partly indemnified by receiving from France New Orleans and all Louisiana west of the Mississippi. She renounced all right to participation in the fishery of Newfoundland. She consented that the adjudication of the prizes made by English cruisers on the coast of Spain should be referred to the English Court of Admiralty, and she acknowledged the long-disputed right of the English to cut logwood in Honduras Bay provided the English destroyed the fortifications they had erected there. In return for these great concessions she received again Havannah and the other ports of Cuba which had been conquered. The news of the conquest of Manilla and the other Philippine Islands did not arrive until after the preliminaries had been signed, and these valuable

possessions were in consequence restored without any equivalent. When Manilla was captured, the private property of the inhabitants was saved from plunder on the condition of a payment of a ransom of a million sterling, one-half of which was paid in money and the other half in bills upon the Spanish Treasury. These bills the Spaniards afterwards refused to honour, and the English Government was never able to obtain their payment.

There can be no doubt that this peace was extremely advantageous to England, but there was hardly a clause in it which was not below what she might reasonably have expected. Every new acquisition which she obtained, and every conquest which she relinquished, was actually in her hands before the peace was signed. Minorca, which was the one great French conquest, would probably have been retaken if the war had continued, and its value did not amount to more than a small fraction of that of the territory which England, after a long series of almost uninterrupted victories, consented to abandon. The terms of the peace were little, if at all, more favourable than might have been obtained in the preceding year, though the war had been since then uniformly and splendidly successful. In the former negotiations France had consented to cede Goree as well as Senegal to England, but Goree, and with it the French slave trade, was now restored. Guadaloupe had been for more than three years an English possession. During that time the importation of a multitude of negroes, and a rapid increase of commerce, had enormously added to its value;[1] and in the impartial and very competent judgment of Chesterfield it might easily have been retained.[2] George Grenville insisted upon its retention, but Bute was so anxious to hurry on the peace that he availed himself of a tem-

[1] See the description of the island by Admiral Rodney.—*Grenville Papers*, ii. 11–13.

[2] Chesterfield's *Letters*, iv. 353.

porary illness which prevented Grenville from attending to public business, to summon a council by which it was surrendered.[1] St. Lucia, which was selected from the neutral islands for surrender, was alone much more valuable than the three neutral islands that were retained. Martinique, from its situation and its strong fortifications, was extremely important as a military post for the protection of the neighbouring islands,[2] and its conquest, which was one of the most arduous and brilliant enterprises of the war, seemed a needless sacrifice of blood and treasure if this rich island was to be restored a few months later without any equivalent. Even Havannah, which was perhaps the richest of all the conquests of the war, would have been restored by Bute without any territorial equivalent, and it was only the resolution of Grenville, and the strong pressure of public opinion, that obliged him to exact in return for it the poor and barren province of Florida.[3] The uncompensated surrender of Manilla was due to the shameful omission of any provision relating to conquests that had been made, though they were not known, before the preliminaries had been signed.

In all these respects the peace was deserving of censure, but we can hardly, I think, regret the abandonment by the ministry of the schemes of Pitt for destroying the whole commercial and naval greatness of France. The war had for the present given England an almost complete monopoly in many fields, and Pitt imagined that it was both possible, and desirable, and just, to prevent France, in spite of her vast seaboard and her great resources, from ever reviving as a naval Power. He maintained that the whole American fishery should be denied her. He had himself in the preceding negotiations consented, on certain conditions,

[1] *Grenville Papers*, i. 450. [2] Ibid. ii. 12, 13.
[3] Ibid. i. 450, 476, 483. *Life of Shelburne*, i. 154.

to leave her a part of it; but he asserted that on this, as on many other points, his opinion had been overruled by his colleagues; that the fisheries of Newfoundland and St. Lawrence formed the great nursery of the French navy, and that they should in consequence be reserved exclusively for England. In the same spirit he desired to obtain for England a strict monopoly of the slave trade, of the sugar trade, of the trade with India, and he protested against any cession which enabled France to carry on any of these branches of commerce. Such a policy could hardly fail to make national animosities indelible. It is probable that France would have resisted it to the uttermost; and it rested not only on exaggerated feelings of national jealousy, but also on very narrow and erroneous views of the nature of commerce. No English statesman maintained more persistently than Pitt the advantages of commercial monopoly, or believed more firmly that the commercial interests of different nations were necessarily antagonistic.[1]

If the peace had been made in a different spirit and by other statesmen, it would probably have been favourably received. The Court party, who observed the many signs of weariness in the nation, and who remembered that during the last two reigns the disposition of the Sovereign to involve the country in German disputes had been the chief source of disaffection, hoped, not altogether unreasonably, that the young King, by putting an end to the German war and

[1] See the striking statement of his views on this matter, *Parl. Hist.* xv. 1265. 'The trade with these conquests [Martinique and Guadaloupe] is of the utmost lucrative nature and of the most considerable extent. The number of ships employed by it are a great resource to our maritime power; and, what is of equal weight, all that we gain on this system is made fourfold to us by the loss which ensues to France. But our conquests in North America are of very little detriment to the commerce of France.'

by showing decisively that he was governed by no German sympathies, would have reaped an abundant harvest of popularity.[1] But all such expectations were soon falsified by the event. No character in England is more detested than that of a Court favourite, and the scandal about the relations of Bute and the mother of the King was eagerly accepted. In the very beginning of the new reign a paper was affixed to the Royal Exchange with the words, 'No petticoat government, no Scotch Minister, no Lord George Sackville,'[2] and after the displacement of Pitt the popular indignation rapidly increased. The City gave instructions to its members to promote a strict inquiry into the disposal of the money that was voted, and to refuse their consent to any peace which did not secure to England all or nearly all the conquests she had made. The example was widely followed. The unpopularity of Bute was such that he could not appear unattended or undisguised in the streets, and he was compelled to enroll a bodyguard of butchers and boxers for his protection. He was insulted as he went to Parliament. On one occasion his chair was attacked by so fierce a mob that his life was in serious danger. The jack boot, which by a pun upon his name was chosen as his popular emblem, was paraded ignominiously through the streets, hung up on a gallows, or thrown into the flames,[3] to-

[1] Thus in Jan. 1761, Lord Melcombe wrote to Bute: 'If the intelligence they bring me be true Mr. Pitt goes down fast in the City, and faster at this end of the town. They add, you rise daily. . . . Should not a measure so extremely popular as the sacrificing that country [Hanover] to this, for a time, to secure an honourable and advantageous peace . . . come immediately from the King, and by his order be carried into execution by the hands in which he places his whole confidence?'—*Adolphus*, i. 571, 572.

[2] Walpole to Montagu, Nov. 13, 1760.

[3] Walpole to Conway, Oct. 26, 1761. Walpole's *Memoirs of George III.* i. 85. *Grenville Papers*, i. 452.

gether with a bonnet or a petticoat symbolising the Princess. The declaration of war against Spain, which signally vindicated the foresight of Pitt, the splendid victories that followed, which were universally accepted as the direct results of his policy, the formal resignation of Newcastle, which brought the favourite into clear relief as the responsible leader of the ministry, all added to the flame. Never perhaps in English history were libels so bitter or so scurrilous, and the influence of Frederick the Great was employed to foment them.[1] The story of Earl Mortimer, who was united by an illicit love to the mother of Edward III., and who by her means for a time governed the country and the King, became the favourite subject of the satirists. Among the papers left by Ben Jonson were the plot and the first scene of an intended play on the subject, and these were now republished with a dedication to Bute from the pen of Wilkes.

But perhaps the most popular topic in the invectives against Bute was his Scotch nationality. In addition to the strong national antipathy of Englishmen to all foreigners, many reasons had made the Scotch peculiarly unpopular. They had for centuries been regarded as natural enemies. The Union had been almost equally disliked by both nations, and closer contact had as yet done very little to soften the animosity. The Scotch were chiefly known in London as eager place-hunters, entering into keen competition with the natives for minor offices. They were poor, proud, sensitive, and pertinacious. Their strange pronunciation, the barrenness of their country, the contrast between the pride of their old nobility and the wretched shifts to which their

[1] See the very curious letter of Frederick to his Ministers Knyphausen and Michell urging them to use all their influence to stir up writers and agitators against Bute.—*Grenville Papers*, i. 467, 468.

poverty compelled them to resort, furnished endless themes of illiberal ridicule. During more than half a century that followed the Union, only a single Englishman had been elected by a Scotch constituency;[1] and there were bitter complaints that a people so exclusive at home should be suffered to descend upon the rich fields of English patronage. Yet the very unpopularity of the Scotch drew them more closely together, and their tenacity of purpose enabled them in the race of ambition to distance many competitors. The contempt for poverty which is one of the most conspicuous signs of the deep vein of vulgarity that mingles with the many noble elements of the English character, and a more than common disposition to judge all foreigners by their own standard of manners, combined with other and somewhat more serious reasons to make the English look down upon the Scotch. As we have already seen, the Scotch members were as yet an unhealthy and a somewhat inferior element in English political life. They had been the last members who received wages for their services. They were still exempt from the property qualification which was required from most English members.[2] They had very little interest in English affairs. They usually voted together, and their venality was notorious.[3]

---

[1] Chauncy Townsend, the Member for Wigtown, who died in 1770.—*Annual Register*, 1770, p. 114.

[2] University members and sons of peers were in England exempt. Townshend's *History of the House of Commons*, ii. 406.

[3] Their subservience had been very bitterly noticed by Jekyll in the last reign. When Walpole's special tax on Papists and Nonjurors was imposed, the Scotch were exempted. Jekyll said: 'I know not why the Scotch should be excused from paying their proportion of this extraordinary tax, unless it was because forty-five Scotch representatives in that House always voted as they were directed.' — Townshend's *Hist. of the House of Commons*, ii. 52, 53. Montesquieu, in his *Notes sur l'Angleterre*, which were written in 1730, had said, 'Il y a des membres écossois qui

The rebellion of 1745 raised the national antipathy to fever heat. The Highland march to Derby, and the disgraceful panic it produced in London, were remembered with a bitterness that was all the more intense because it was largely mixed with shame. And now, when a Scotch representative peer of the name and lineage of the Stuarts had become almost omnipotent at the Court, when Jacobite Scotchmen were received with marked favour by the Sovereign; when Scotch birth was believed to be one of the best passports to English promotion, there arose a cry of hatred and indignation which rang through the length and breadth of the land. Churchill, in his 'Prophecy of Famine,' and Wilkes, in his 'North Briton,' were its most powerful exponents. The former, in lines of savage vigour, depicted Scotland as a treeless, flowerless land formed out of the refuse of the universe, and inhabited by the very bastards of creation; where Famine had fixed her chosen throne; where a scanty population, gaunt with hunger, and hideous with dirt and with the itch, spent their wretched days in brooding over the fallen fortunes of their native dynasty, and in watching with mingled envy and hatred the mighty nation that had subdued them. At last their greed and their hatred were alike gratified. What Force could not accomplish had been done by Fraud. The land flowing with milk and honey was thrown open to them. Already the most important places were at their disposal, and soon, through the influence of their great fellow-countrymen, they would descend upon every centre of English power to divide, weaken, plunder, and betray.

With less genius, but with even greater effect, Wilkes collected in his weekly libels every topic that could inflame the national hatred against the Scotch.

---

n'ont que deux cents livres sterling pour leur voix et la vendent à ce prix.'

He contended that 'a Scot had no more right to preferment in England than a Hanoverian or a Hottentot;' and he pointed out with bitter emphasis how the Scotchman Mansfield was Chief Justice of England, how the Scotchman Loudon commanded the British forces in Portugal, how the Scots Sir Gilbert Elliot and James Oswald were at the Treasury Board, how the Scotchman Ramsay was Court painter, and the Scotchman Adam, Court architect; how a crowd of obscure Scotchmen had obtained pensions or small preferments, paid for from the earnings of Englishmen. Buckingham Palace was nicknamed Holyrood on account of the number of Scotchmen who entered it.[1] The Duke of Cumberland had long been one of the most unpopular men in the kingdom, partly on account of the severities that followed Culloden; but these severities were now not only forgiven but applauded, and, as he was in opposition to Bute, he speedily became a hero, and was extolled as the second deliverer of England. The distinction between the two nations was so deep and marked that Horace Walpole gave the Scotch birth of Sir Gilbert Elliot as a conclusive reason why he should not lead the House of Commons, and the Duke of Bedford assigned the same reason as one of the objections to the appointment of Forrester to the Speakership.[2] Junius himself never wrote with a more savage hatred than when he reminded the King of the treachery of the Scotch to Charles I., and dilated on the folly of any sovereign of any race who should hereafter rest upon their honour.

These instances are sufficient to show how far the great work of uniting the two nations was from its accomplishment. The dislike of the Scotch continued for many years unchecked, and among the Whigs it

[1] Walpole to Montagu, June 8, 1762.

[2] *Bedford Correspondence*, iii. xxxiii.

was greatly strengthened by the strong vein of Toryism, if not of Jacobitism, which was at this time conspicuous in Scotch writers. In the volumes of his History, published in 1754 and 1756, Hume had devoted a grace of style, a skill of narration, and a subtlety of thought, which no English historian had yet equalled, to an elaborate apology for the conduct of the Stuarts. Smollett was one of the most conspicuous and most violent of the writers in defence of the Court. The 'Memoirs of Great Britain,' by Sir John Dalrymple, which appeared in 1771 and 1773, for the first time revealed the damaging fact that Algernon Sidney, whose memory had been almost canonised by his party, had received money from the French ambassador, and in 1775 the 'Original Papers' published by Macpherson gave an almost equal shock to the Whig tradition by proving the later communications of Marlborough with the Stuarts. The writings of Horace Walpole sufficiently show the indignation with which these books were regarded by Whig politicians, while the popular dislike was incessantly displayed. Macklin painted the Scotch in the most odious and despicable light in the character of Sir Pertinax MacSycophant in the 'Man of the World.' Hume wrote in 1765 that the English rage against the Scotch was daily increasing, and he added that it was such that he had frequently resolved never to set his foot on English soil.[1] At a time when the passion for representing plays of Shakespeare with dresses that were historically correct was at its height, it was suggested that Macbeth should wear tartan instead of the modern military dress; but Garrick rejected the proposal, not because it was historically incorrect, but because the appearance of the Scotch national dress would infallibly damn the piece.[2] When

[1] Burton's *Life of Hume*, ii. 665.

[2] Doran's *Jacobite London*, ii. p. 350.

Home, the famous author of 'Douglas,' produced his 'Fatal Discovery' in 1769, Garrick, in spite of the success of the earlier play, did not venture to reveal the name of the Scotch author, and induced a young Oxford gentleman to father the piece. The play was successful till the true author having then imprudently disclosed himself, its popularity speedily waned.[1] As late as 1771, when Smollett published 'Humphry Clinker,' the last and perhaps the greatest of his novels, it was assailed with a storm of obloquy on the ground that it was written to defend the Scotch.[2]

It is a remarkable proof of the change that in a few years had passed over English politics, of the disintegration of the Whig party, and of the increasing force of corrupt influence in Parliament, that Bute should have been able, in spite of all his disadvantages, by the assistance of royal favour, to carry his measures triumphantly through Parliament. In the preceding reign Carteret had for a short time occupied a somewhat similar position; but, notwithstanding his brilliant talents and his long and varied experience, he soon found his task an impossible one. Bute was a man of very ordinary intellect, and he came to office with no previous experience of public business, with no practice of debate, with no skill in managing men. His speech in defence of the Preliminaries of the Peace is said to have exhibited some power both of reasoning and language, but it appears to have been a mere elaborate

---

[1] Scott's *Essay on the Life and Works of John Home.*

[2] See Walpole's *Memoirs of George III.* iv. 328. We have a curious illustration of the change that may take place in national judgments in the Autobiography of Lord Shelburne. 'Like the generality of Scotch,' he says, 'Lord Mansfield had no regard to truth whatever.' — Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne*, i. 89. Among the many admirable qualities of the Scotch there is probably none which a modern observer would regard as so conspicuous and so uncontested as their eminent truthfulness.

essay, probably learned by heart, and much impaired by a very formal delivery. Charles Townshend compared the slow monotonous succession of its sentences to the firing of minute-guns. There have been statesmen with very little political ability, who have maintained a high place in politics by the personal confidence they inspired, by a frankness and simplicity of character which disarmed enmities and attached friends. But of these qualities, to which the success of Lord Althorp in the present century was mainly due, Bute was wholly destitute. His honour, though it was probably unstained, was certainly not unsuspected. His relations with the Princess Dowager, and the negotiations with Prince Galitzin, left a cloud of suspicion upon it. The publication in 1756 of the 'Memoirs of Torcy' had for the first time disclosed to the English public the startling fact that, in the negotiations between the English and French in 1709, a large bribe had been offered to Marlborough to induce him to favour the French cause, and a charge of having accepted a bribe from France to carry the Peace of Paris was brought publicly against Bute in 1765. Parliament, it is true, a few years later, after a careful investigation, pronounced it wholly frivolous;[1] but it is a remarkable illustration of the low estimate in which Bute was held, that Lord Camden, long afterwards, expressed his firm belief that it was substantially true.[2] A natural turn for tortuous methods and secret intrigues, combined with great moroseness and haughtiness of manner, had made Bute disliked and distrusted by all with whom he had to deal. Even the Duke of Bedford, with whom he chiefly shares the praise or blame of the peace, came to regard him with hatred when he found that, during the negotiations, he

[1] *Parliamentary Hist.* xvi. 763–785.

[2] See Lord Stanhope's *History of England*, iv. 273.

was secretly corresponding with the French. Of administrative ability he was wholly destitute. The peace, bad as it was, would have been much worse but for the intervention of his colleagues, and especially of George Grenville, and the financial administration of this ministry was one of the worst ever known in England. Sir Francis Dashwood, who had been made Chancellor of the Exchequer, was honourably distinguished in the last reign by his strenuous opposition to the execution of Byng, but he was better known as the President of the Medmenham Brotherhood or Franciscan Club, a well-known society famous for its debaucheries, and for its blasphemous parodies of the rites of the Catholic religion. Of financial knowledge he did not possess the rudiments, and his ignorance was all the more conspicuous from the great financial ability of his predecessor Legge. His budget speech was so confused and incapable that it was received with shouts of laughter. An excise of 4*s.* in the hogshead, to be paid by the grower, which he imposed on cyder and perry, raised a resistance through the cyder counties hardly less furious than that which had been directed against the excise scheme of Walpole.[1]

One man, however, of real ability and of indomitable courage stood by Bute. Henry Fox, soured by disappointment and unpopularity, at last saw the possibility, by a bold act of apostasy, of recovering his ascendency, and he fearlessly confronted the tempest of opposition. Of the feeling of the country he had no illusion. Just before he took the lead of the Commons he wrote to his confidant Shelburne: 'Does not your Lordship begin to

[1] *Parl. Hist.* xv. 1307–1316. This tax was said to have been proposed 'because Sir Francis Dashwood could not be made to understand a tax on linen, which was first intended, sufficiently to explain it to the House.'—Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne*, i. 186.

fear that there are few left of any sort, of our friends even, who are for the peace? I own I do.'[1]

Then came a period of intimidation and corruption compared with which the worst days of the Walpole administration appeared pure. Bribes ranging from 200*l.* and upwards were given almost publicly at the pay office. Martin, the Secretary of the Treasury, afterwards acknowledged that no less than 25,000*l.* were expended in a single morning in purchasing votes. Large sums are said to have been given to corporations to petition for the peace. Urgent letters were written to the lords lieutenant of the counties calling on them to procure addresses with the same object. From the very beginning of the ascendency of Bute, patronage had been enlarged, and employed with extravagant profusion for the purpose of increasing the political power of the Crown, and this process was rapidly extended. Bute did not venture, like Harley, to create simultaneously twelve peers, but sixteen were made in the space of two years. The number of Lords of the Bedchamber was increased from twelve to twenty-two, each with a salary of 500*l.* a year, and they were selected exclusively from among the members of Parliament. It was found necessary to raise 3,500,000*l.*, and this was done partly by two lotteries, and partly by a loan which was not thrown open to public competition, and which was issued on terms so shamefully improvident that the shares at once rose 10 per cent. A large proportion of these shares were distributed among the friends of the Government, and thus a new and most wasteful form of bribery was introduced into English politics.[2]

Intimidation of the grossest kind was at the same

[1] Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne*, i. 157.

[2] Walpole's *George III.* i. 199. *Hist. of the late Minority*, pp. 69, 83, 93–102. *Anecdotes of Chatham*, i. 282. *North Briton*, p. 234.

time practised. All the partisans of Newcastle were at once driven from office, and some of the most prominent men in the country were treated with an arrogance that recalled the worst days of the Stuarts. The Duke of Devonshire was expelled from the office of Chamberlain with circumstances of the grossest insult. The King refused even to see him on the occasion, and with his own hand struck his name from the list of Privy Councillors. The Dukes of Newcastle and Grafton, and the Marquis of Rockingham, were deprived of the lord-lieutenancies of their counties.[1] It has always been one of the most healthy features of English political life that the public offices are filled with permanent officials, who are unaffected by party fluctuations, who instruct alike Whig and Tory ministers, preserve unbroken the steady tendencies of government, and from the stability of their position acquire a knowledge of administrative details and an independence and impartiality of judgment which could never be reasonably expected from men whose tenure of office was dependent on the ascendency of a party. This system Fox and Bute resolved to break down. They determined that every servant of the Government, even to the very lowest, should be of their own nomination.[2] A persecution as foolish as it was harsh was directed by Fox against the humblest officials who had been appointed or recom-

[1] *Adolphus*, i. 119. Albemarle's *Life of Rockingham*, i. 158, 159. Harris, *Life of Hardwicke*, iii. 320, 333–335.

[2] 'The impertinence of our conquered enemies last night was great, but will not continue so if his Majesty shows no lenity. But, my Lord, with regard to their numerous dependants in Crown employments, it behoves your Lordship in particular to leave none of them. Their connections spread very wide, and every one of their relatives and friends is in his heart your enemy. . . . Turn the tables and you will immediately have thousands who will think the safety of themselves depends upon your Lordship, and will therefore be sincere and active friends.'—Fox to Bute, Nov. 1762. *Shelburne's Life*, i. 180.

mended by Whig statesmen, or were in any way connected with them. Clerks, tidewaiters, and excisemen were included in the proscription. The widow of an admiral who was distantly connected with the Duke of Devonshire, a poor man who had been rewarded for bravery against smugglers at the recommendation of the Duke of Grafton, a schoolboy who was a nephew of Legge, were among those who were deprived of places, pensions, or reversions. There was even a design of depriving the members of the Opposition of the great patent places they held, although the terms of the patents distinctly asserted that the places were for life. Fox wished to submit to the twelve judges the question whether it was not in the power of the King to annul the patents; but the Chancellor, Lord Northington, declared that it would be as reasonable to ask them to pronounce upon the validity of the Great Charter. It was the aim of the Court party to crush to the very dust the great Whig connection, by showing that no person, however humble, who had received favours from it could escape the vengeance of the Crown, while every resource of patronage and place was employed for the purpose of consolidating the new interest. One official, who for seven years had been of the King's bedchamber, was turned out solely because he had no seat in Parliament, and could therefore be of no use there.[1]

Among the few merits of Bute must be reckoned his strong literary tastes; and his patronage, though rarely or never extended to any writers except those of his party, was sometimes judiciously bestowed. Johnson owed to him his pension of 300*l.* a year. Sir James Stuart, the Jacobite political economist who had been obliged to fly from England on account of his participation in the rebellion of 1745, was pardoned through his

[1] Walpole's *Memoirs of George III.* i. 233–240.

instrumentality.[1] That invaluable collection of about 30,000 pamphlets published at the time of the Commonwealth, which forms one of the most precious treasures of the British Museum, had been purchased by Bute for his own library, and it was bought from him for presentation to the nation, by the King.[2] Prosecutions for libel during this ministry were exceedingly rare; it was one of the first objects of Bute to set up a paper to defend the peace, and a crowd of writers were soon induced by pensions or places to support the ministry. It was said, though probably on no very sure authority, that more than 30,000*l.* were expended on the Press in the first two years of the reign.[3] Pitt became the incessant object of the most virulent attacks. Smollett assailed him, in a paper called 'The Briton,' with disgraceful violence, and with very little of the ability he showed in other fields. Dr. Shebbeare, who in 1758 had been sentenced to imprisonment and to the pillory for a virulent libel against the House of Hanover, was pensioned by Bute in order that he should defend the peace, and Dr. Francis, Murphy, Mallet, and several other obscure writers, were employed in the same cause. Hogarth, who was sergeant-painter to the King, powerfully assisted them by his clever print of the 'Times,' which appeared in 1762. Europe was represented in flames, which were rapidly extending to Great Britain, and Pitt, with a pair of bellows, was stimulating the

---

[1] *Burke's Correspondence*, i. 130. Colman's play, *The English Merchant*, was written to grace his pardon. An exceedingly favourable account of the literary acquirements and of the conversation of Lord Bute will be found in Dutens' *Mémoires d'un Voyageur qui se repose*, ii. 299–306. The author had been employed by Bute in some negotiations preparatory to the Peace of Paris.

[2] *Annual Register*, 1763, p. 117.

[3] *Anecdotes of Chatham*, i. 203. Adolphus, *Hist. George III.* i. 115, 121. Dodington's *Diary*, Dec. 20, 1760.

conflagration. Around his neck hung a Cheshire cheese with 3,000*l.* written on it, alluding to his pension and to an expression in one of his speeches that he would rather live on Cheshire cheese than submit to the enemies of England. The aldermen of London were humbly worshipping him. Newcastle fed the flames with 'Monitors' and 'North Britons,' the chief papers of the Opposition; the King of Prussia, like Nero, was fiddling amid the conflagration; while Bute, assisted by English soldiers and sailors, and by Highlanders, was endeavouring to extinguish it. A man, representing Temple, was squirting at Bute from the window of the Temple Coffee House. A waggon was bearing off the treasures taken from the Spanish ship *Hermione*. In the distance, the Newcastle arms were being taken down and replaced by the patriotic ones.

The success which attended the measures of Bute was, for a time at least, very great. Parliament was now thoroughly amenable to corrupt influence. In addition to the nucleus of genuine Tories, the Government could count upon the Bedford connection, upon a portion of the Grenville connection, upon the small group of politicians who followed the fortunes of Fox, and upon nearly all the bishops. Newcastle was old and thoroughly discredited, and most of his adherents had gone over to Bute;[1] and Pitt, though incomparably the greatest figure in English politics, had alienated from himself most of his former colleagues, had little parliamentary influence, and was prostrated during a great part of this critical period by the gout. His appearance at the Guildhall in the procession of the King was much blamed, and was afterwards regretted by himself; but with this exception his conduct was singularly stainless. He had been struck down in the very

[1] Rockingham's *Memoirs*, i. 152.

zenith of his great career and when his popularity was at its height, and the necessity which compelled Bute to declare war against Spain had amply vindicated his policy. But his language was equally free from irritation, recrimination, and triumph. His attitude was that of a great citizen conscious that his country was passing through a great crisis, and resolved at every sacrifice of personal considerations to support the Government in carrying the war to a triumphant issue, and securing an adequate and honourable peace. Violent and impetuous as he often was, no statesman felt more strongly that foreign politics were not the field in which party triumphs might be legitimately sought, and that in time of war internal division should be as much as possible suspended. During the war in Portugal he strongly supported the Government, recommending the strictest union, and declaring against all 'altercation, which was no way to carry on the public business.'[1] The fear of him was very great, and it was doubtless in order to neutralise the effects of his eloquence that the exclusion of strangers from the gallery of the House of Commons was at this time enforced with special rigour.[2] Burke, who was in general by no means one of his greatest admirers, said with truth that the manner in which after his fall he 'made his own justification, without impeaching the conduct of any of his colleagues, or taking one measure that might seem to arise from disgust or opposition, set a seal upon his character.'[3] No one ever understood better the true dignity of statesmanship. He met the storm of scurrility that raged around him with a majestic and somewhat disdainful silence, and calmly watched the tide of popular favour which was rising higher and higher. At

[1] *Thackeray*, ii. 7.
[2] *Parl. Hist.* xv. 1227.
[3] *Annual Register*, 1761, p. 481.

the same time he stooped to no demagogue art. The favourite topic of the opponents of the Government was abuse of the Scotch; but Pitt never lost an opportunity of rebuking the national prejudice, extolling the valour which had been shown by the Highland regiments during the war, and censuring the conduct of those who were trying to sow animosity between the two nations.

The Preliminaries were approved in the House of Lords without a division, in the House of Commons by 319 to 65. The Duke of Newcastle, seeing opposition to be hopeless, induced his friends to retire before the division. Pitt spoke against the terms for three and a half hours; but he was so broken by painful illness that he was obliged to speak sitting, and although his speech contained passages of great beauty and power, his voice often sank into an inaudible murmur. The exultation of the Court was unbounded. 'Now,' said the Princess Dowager, when the news of the decisive vote arrived, 'my son *is* King of England.' But outside the House the feeling was very different, and the ministers who made the Peace of Paris were scarcely more popular than those who had made the Peace of Utrecht. The City of London and the great county of York refused all solicitations to address. The animosity against Bute grew daily stronger, and Bedford was hissed in the streets.[1] The cyder counties, which had hitherto been the warmest supporters of Toryism, were thrown into a blaze of agitation by the cyder tax; and although it was carried by overwhelming majorities in both Houses, this is said to have been the first occasion on which the House of Lords divided on a money Bill.[2] Probably never since the days of the Revolution had the ministers of the Crown been the objects of such execration in the country. Bute quailed before the storm. He had very

[1] Walpole's *Memoirs of George III.* [2] *Parl. Hist.* xv. 1316.

little experience in the agitations of public life; he was constitutionally a man of no great resolution of character; he had lately inherited a gigantic fortune, and had obtained from the Crown the Garter and the Rangership of Richmond Park for himself, and an English peerage for his son. He had little left to aspire to, and many dangers to fear. In the Cabinet he found himself isolated, and his Chief Justice, Lord Mansfield, more than once voted against him. He was sincerely attached to the King, and could not but be sensible that he was ruining his popularity. His health was weak, and he hoped under a new ministry to wield with greatly diminished obloquy the same powers as in the beginning of the reign.

These were probably the real reasons of his resignation, which took place, somewhat unexpectedly, on April 8, 1763. Dashwood retired with him, receiving a sinecure and the title of Lord De Spencer. Fox claimed his peerage, but was thrown into transports of fury by hearing that the King and Bute expected him, when receiving it, to resign his enormously lucrative office of Paymaster. The bargain for the peerage had been made through the intervention of Shelburne, and Fox accused Shelburne of having shamefully duped him. It is certain that Shelburne, when engaging the services of Fox to carry the peace, never told him that on receiving the promised peerage he must resign his office. It is equally certain that Fox had never promised to resign it, and that nevertheless Shelburne, without his knowledge or authority, had spoken of his resignation as a settled thing. It was said, on the other side, that public opinion would have been greatly scandalised if Fox retained such an office with a peerage, that Fox had at one time been himself of that opinion, and that Shelburne had only given in conversation his own opinion on the subject, and had not professed to be communi-

cating the words of Fox. The contention was long and vehement, and Fox lost no opportunity of describing Shelburne as 'a perfidious and infamous liar;' but he at last succeeded in retaining the office, though entering the Upper House as Lord Holland. He kept it till 1765, but without taking any further part in active politics.[1] The character of the ministers was shown to the very last; not less than 52,000*l.* a year out of the public money was granted in reversions to the followers of Bute.[2]

The history of this ministry is peculiarly shameful. During two reigns the Tory party had been excluded from office, and during all that time they had constituted themselves the special champions of parliamentary purity. In the writings of Bolingbroke, in the speeches of the Tory leaders, in the place Bills they had repeatedly advocated, the necessity of putting an end to political corruption was given the foremost place. This had been their favourite cry at every election, the battle-ground they continually selected in their contests with the Whig ministers of the first two Georges; and in the beginning of the new reign the purification of Parliament and of administration had been continually represented as the great benefit that might be expected from the downfall of the Whigs.[3] At last the party had

---

[1] Compare Walpole's *George III.* i. 257, 258, with Lord E. Fitzmaurice's elaborate defence of Shelburne.—*Shelburne's Life*, i. 199–229.

[2] Walpole to Montagu, April 14, 1763.

[3] Walpole says: 'It was given out that the King would suffer no money to be spent on elections,' that 'he had forbidden any money [at the general election] to be issued from the Treasury.'—Walpole's *George III.* i. 19, 41 'Every one,' said Burke, 'must remember that the Cabal set out with the most astonishing prudery, both moral and political. Those who in a few months after soused over head and ears into the deepest and dirtiest pits of corruption, cried out violently against the indirect practices in the electing and managing of Parliaments which had formerly prevailed. . . . Corruption was

risen to power, and in ten months of office they far surpassed the corruption of their predecessors. They had long protested against the monopoly of office by a single party; but when they came to power they had driven out the humblest officials who were connected with their opponents with a severity unparalleled in English history. They had delighted in expatiating upon the administrative incapacity of the great Whig families, and upon the contrast between the scandalous Courts of the first two Georges and the unchallenged purity of the Tory King; but the financial policy of the administration of Bute displayed a grosser incapacity than had been exhibited by any previous Government, and the appointment of Dashwood and the policy of Fox produced a scandal at least equal to any in the former reigns. The fame of the country was lowered by the peace; an enthusiastic loyalty was dimmed. The ill feeling between England and Scotland, which had been rapidly subsiding, was revived, and the whole country was filled with riot and discontent.

After a short negotiation, George Grenville was placed at the head of the Treasury. A remarkable letter, written by Bute to the Duke of Bedford a few days before the resignation of the former, sums up the principles on which the King was resolved that his government should be conducted. The first and most important was, 'never upon any account to suffer those ministers of the late reign who have attempted to fetter and enslave him, ever to come into his service while he lives to hold the sceptre;'[1] in other words, he was determined that the group of Whig noblemen who

---

to be cast down from Court as Até was from Heaven.'—*Thoughts on the Causes of the present Discontents.* See, too, the *Seasonable Hints from an Honest Man on the present Crisis.*

[1] *Bedford Corresp.* iii. 223–226.

were accustomed to act together in politics, and who during the last reign had acquired a preponderating power, were, at all hazards and under all circumstances, to be absolutely disqualified from acting as ministers of the Crown. In order to maintain this disqualification, the King was resolved 'to collect every other force, and especially the followers of the Duke of Bedford and of Mr. Fox, to his councils and support,' and to give every encouragement to those Whig country gentlemen who, without abandoning any political principles, would consent to support his Government. It was hoped that in this manner a Government might be formed which would command a secure majority in both Houses, but in which no set of statesmen would be able to dictate to the King. It was hoped, at the same time, that with the retirement of Bute the feeling of loyalty to the Crown would revive, and that the storm of popular agitation would subside. 'I am firmly of opinion,' wrote Bute, 'that my retirement will remove the only unpopular part of Government.'

The character of George Grenville, who for the next two years was the strongest influence in the English Government, has been admirably portrayed by the greatest political writer of his own generation and by the greatest English historian of the present century, and there is little to be added to the pictures they have drawn. Unlike Bute, and unlike a large number of the most prominent Whig statesmen, Grenville was an undoubtedly able man, but only as possessing very ordinary qualities to an extraordinary degree. He was a conspicuous example of a class of men very common in public life, who combine considerable administrative powers with an almost complete absence of the political sense—who have mastered the details of public business with an admirable competence and skill, but who have scarcely anything of

the tact, the judgment, or the persuasiveness that are essential for the government of men. Educated as a lawyer, and afterwards designated for the post of Speaker of the House of Commons, he surpassed all his leading contemporaries in his knowledge of parliamentary precedents, of constitutional law, and of administrative details; and he brought to the Government an untiring industry, a rare business faculty, a courage that flinched from no opponent, and an obstinacy that was only strengthened by disaster. Few men were more sincerely respected by their friends, and, though he never attained any general popularity, few men had a greater weight in the House of Commons. His admirers were able to allege with truth that he was one of the most frugal of ministers at a time when economy was peculiarly unpopular;[1] that, though his fortune was far below that of most of his competitors, and though he was by no means indifferent to money, he lived strictly within his private means, and was free from all suspicion of personal corruption; and that he more than once sacrificed the favour of the King, of the people, and of his own family, to what he believed to be right. His enemies maintained with equal truth that he was hard, narrow, formal, and self-sufficient, without extended views or generous sympathies, signally destitute of the tact of statesmanship which averts or conciliates opposition, prone on every occasion to strain authority to the utmost limit which precedent or the strict letter of the law would admit.

Being a younger brother of Lord Temple, and brother-in-law of Pitt and of Lord Egremont, he had the assistance of considerable family influence in his career; but he had himself neither high rank nor great

[1] He boasted that the secret service money was lower in his ministry than in any other recent administration.—*Grenville Papers*, ii. 519, iii. 143.

wealth; his talents were not shining; he was peculiarly deficient in the qualities that win popularity either with the nation or in the closet, and the success with which he slowly emerged through many subordinate offices to the foremost place was chiefly due to his solid application and indomitable will. In the early part of his life he was closely connected with Pitt. Like him he began his career among the 'Patriots,' who were opposed to Walpole, and as early as 1754, Pitt had pronounced him second only to the great party leaders in his knowledge of the business of the House of Commons.[1] He was dismissed from office by Newcastle, with Pitt, in 1755; held office under Pitt during the German war; but, after many transient differences, at last openly quarrelled with him, and then inveighed against the extravagance of the war of which he had been an official though a subordinate and a reluctant supporter.

Apart, indeed, from all questions of personal ambition, the characters of the two brothers-in-law were so opposed that their rupture was almost inevitable. Except in matters of military administration, Pitt had very little knowledge of public business, and he was singularly ignorant of finance. He excelled in flashes of splendid but irregular genius; in daring, comprehensive, and far-seeing schemes of policy; in the power of commanding the sympathies and evoking the energies of great bodies of men. He was pre-eminently a war minister, 'pleased with the tempest when the waves ran high,' continually seeking to extend the power and increase the influence of his nation, too ready to plunge into every European complication, and too indifferent to the calamities of war and to the accumulations of debt. Grenville, on the other hand, was minute, accu-

[1] See *Grenville Papers*, i. pp. ix., x.

rate, methodical, parsimonious, and pacific, delighting in detail, anxious above all things to establish a sound system of finance and a safe and moderate system of foreign policy, desponding to a fault in his judgment of events, clear and powerful, indeed, but very tedious in debate, and little accustomed to look beyond the walls of the House and the strict letter of the law. During the last years of George II. he had some connection with the Leicester House party of Bute and the Princess of Wales; and when Pitt retired from office in 1761, Grenville, as we have seen, became leader of the House of Commons. His sincere desire for peace may excuse, or at least palliate, his acceptance of office under Bute, and his silent acquiescence in the corrupt and arbitrary measures of that unhappy administration; and he at this time did good service to the country by compelling Bute to exact compensation from Spain for the cession of Havannah. He was, however, so discontented with the details of the peace that he refused to take any part in defending it, and was accordingly removed from the leadership of the House, and exchanged his position of Secretary of State for the less prominent and somewhat less dignified office of First Lord of the Admiralty, where he appears to have confined himself chiefly to the duties of his department.[1] Bute recommended him as his successor, apparently under the belief that he was a mere official drudge, and would yield readily to the inspiration of a master.

He became the head of the Government on April 8, 1763, holding the two offices of First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, which had not been united since the death of Pelham. Lord Egremont, whose influence among the Tories was very great, and

[1] See an interesting autobiographical sketch in the *Grenville Papers*, i. 422–439, 482–485.

Lord Halifax, who was a man of popular manners and character, but of no great ability or power, were made Secretaries of State, and were intended to share the chief power; but the early death of the first and the insignificance of the latter left Grenville almost without a rival.

His natural ally would have been his elder brother, Lord Temple, a man of very great wealth and position, of no remarkable talent or acquirement, but in a high degree ambitious, arrogant, violent, jealous, and vindictive. Temple, however, was closely allied with Pitt, who in the early part of his career was in a great degree dependent on the Grenville influence, and had even been under pecuniary obligations to his brother-in-law, and who repaid the boon by giving Temple a very disproportionate influence in his counsels and his combinations. He had been First Lord of the Admiralty in the administration of Pitt and Devonshire, Lord Privy Seal in the far greater administration of Pitt and Newcastle, and, although he was extremely disliked by George II., Pitt succeeded in obtaining for him the Garter, which was the great object of his ambition. In spite of several explosions of personal jealousy, he steadily supported the German policy of Pitt, joined him in recommending war with Spain in 1761, retired with him from office, and became from that time one of the most violent and factious of politicians. He is reported to have said of himself, very frankly, that 'he loved faction, and had a great deal of money to spare,'[1] and the saying, whether it be true or false, describes very faithfully the character of his policy. Indifferent to the emoluments of office, and unconscious of any remarkable administrative powers, he delighted in the subterranean and more ignoble works of faction, in forming intrigues, inciting

[1] *Grenville Papers*, iii. p. xxxvii.

mobs, and inspiring libels. He was the special friend and patron of Wilkes, and he was more closely connected than any other leading politician of his time with the vast literature of scurrilous and anonymous political libels. He assisted many of the writers with money or with information, and he was believed to have suggested, inspired, or in part composed some of the most venomous of their productions. He was accused of having 'worked in the mines of successive factions for near thirty years together,' of 'whispering to others where they might obtain torches, though he was never seen to light them himself;' and although his personal friends ascribed to him considerable private virtues, his honour as a public man was rated very low. His influence upon Pitt, as we shall see in the sequel, was very disastrous, and at the time when Grenville assumed the first place he was bitterly opposed to his brother.

Being deprived of assistance in this quarter, Grenville might naturally have expected his chief support from the Duke of Bedford, who had so lately been his colleague, and who was at the head of a considerable section of the Whigs. The importance of this nobleman, like that of Lord Temple, depended altogether upon the accident of birth which made him the head of one of the greatest of the Whig houses, and it is not, I think, easy to find any consistent principle in his strangely intricate career, except a desire to aggrandise his family influence. The great inclination towards wealth which has usually prevailed in English politics has always been justified, among other reasons, by the consideration that a rich man, to whom the emoluments of office are a matter of indifference, is much less likely than a poor man to be bribed or to be guilty of political sycophancy or apostasy; but it is worthy of notice that this presumption hardly applies to the heads of great houses, who, under the system of government that preceded the Reform

Bill, were exposed to special corrupting influences scarcely less powerful than those which act upon needy men. The desire of obtaining garters, ribands, and promotions for themselves, and especially the imperious necessity of providing for a long train of rapacious followers, on whose support their influence mainly depended, has not unfrequently made great noblemen of splendid fortune and position the most inveterate of place-hunters. The Duke of Bedford does not appear personally to have cared much for office; but his followers were among the most unprincipled politicians in England, and the faction he directed amalgamated cordially with no party, but made overtures in turn to each, entered into temporary alliances with each, deserted each, and formed and dissolved its connections chiefly on personal grounds. The Duke himself was violent, harsh, and fearless, and was noted as the only man who ventured to oppose Pitt in the Cabinet when that imperious statesman was in the zenith of his power.[1] He began his career in opposition to Walpole, and exerted all his powers to produce a Spanish war. In the earlier years of the Pelham ministry, he showed considerable administrative abilities as First Lord of the Admiralty from 1744 to 1748, and he afterwards had the rare fortune of taking a leading part in the negotiation of two peaces, each of which was probably on the whole beneficial to the country, but neither of which was at all glorious or popular. As Secretary of State under Pelham, he in a great degree dictated the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, which concluded the Spanish war, without obtaining any object for which that war was undertaken. As ambassador to France, under Bute, he negotiated the Peace of Paris, which made him so unpopular that for some time he could not show himself publicly in the streets of London. In the

[1] See *Bedford Corresp.* iii. 56.

intervening Devonshire administration he was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, where he took some measures to mitigate the penal laws against the Catholics, but where his attempts to restrict the rights of the Irish Parliament excited violent riots, and led to the ignominious defeat of his Government. He was closely connected with Fox, with whom he joined the ministry of Bute, and whose harshest and most tyrannical acts received the warm approbation of his confidential follower Rigby. The dissatisfaction of Grenville at some portions of the peace had, however, produced a coldness between Bedford and Grenville, which for some time prevented their cordial co-operation. When Bute retired from office he implored Bedford to accept the position of President of the Council in order to carry on with Grenville a system of Government substantially the same as that of the favourite; but Bedford declined the offer on the ground that such a ministry could not stand. He recommended the King and Bute to send for the great Whig families; and, though some of his followers took offices under Grenville, his position towards him in the beginning of his ministry was one of neutrality, if not of secret hostility.

The Government, under these circumstances, was not strong, and at first it appeared probable that the wishes of the Court would be fulfilled, and that Bute would be its real though unofficial director. For some time most important negotiations relating to its composition were conducted by him, and the Speech, which closed Parliament on April 19, 1763, identified its foreign policy with that of the preceding ministry; for the King was made to speak of the peace as having been concluded 'upon conditions so honourable to my crown, and so beneficial to my people,' and to suggest that England had been the means of securing a satisfactory peace for the King of Prussia. Wilkes, who for a few days had suspended the

publication of the 'North Briton' to watch the course of events, now broke silence; and on April 23 the famous 45th number appeared, attacking the King's Speech with great asperity. The writer dilated especially upon the abandonment of the King of Prussia, the inadequate terms of the peace, the Cyder Act, the frequent promotion of Scotchmen and Jacobites, and he asserted that 'the King is only the first magistrate of this country, . . . responsible to his people for the due exercise of the royal functions in the choice of ministers, &c.' 'The personal character,' he added, 'of our present amiable Sovereign makes us easy and happy that so great a power is lodged in such hands; but the favourite has given too just cause for him to escape the general odium.' The King's Speech is, and has always been regarded as, the speech of the ministers, and, judging it in that light, Wilkes pronounced the last speech from the throne to be 'the most abandoned instance of ministerial effrontery ever attempted to be imposed upon mankind.' 'Every friend of his country,' he continued, 'must lament that a prince of so many great and amiable qualities, whom England truly reveres, can be brought to give the sanction of his sacred name to the most odious measures, and to the most unjustifiable public declarations, from a throne ever renowned for truth, honour, and unsullied virtue.' 'The ministers' speech of last Tuesday is not to be paralleled in the annals of this country.'

The blow was a very skilful one. The King's Speech, as Wilkes truly asserted, had long been regarded as simply the composition of the ministers, and as such it was fully open to criticism. Even Fox, the leading minister in carrying the peace, had very recently asserted this doctrine in the plainest terms.[1] Consider-

[1] Walpole's *George III.* i. 121.

ing the Speech in this light, the criticisms of Wilkes, though severe, were not excessive, and were certainly less violent than some in previous numbers of his paper. It had become, however, a main object of the Court party to draw a broad distinction between the King and his ministers, and to arrest what was regarded as the absorption of Crown influence by the administration. The paper of Wilkes, in the eyes of the Court party, was a direct attack upon the personal veracity of the Sovereign; and although Wilkes was now member for Aylesbury, and therefore protected by the vague and formidable panoply of parliamentary privilege, it was determined at all hazards to crush him. The King himself gave orders to prosecute him,[1] and for several years the ruin of one very insignificant individual was a main object of the Executive.

John Wilkes, who now became one of the most prominent figures in English politics, was at this time in his thirty-sixth year. The son of a rich trader and of a Presbyterian mother, he had been educated at a Presbyterian school at Hertford, and in the house of a Presbyterian tutor, and he afterwards studied at the University of Leyden. When only twenty-two he married a rich heiress, ten years older than himself, and of strict Methodistical principles, from whom he was soon after separated and whom he treated with great baseness. His countenance was repulsively ugly. His life was scandalously and notoriously profligate, and he was

[1] This is stated in the Journal of the Duke of Grafton.—See Campbell's *Chancellors*, vi. 327; and also *Grenville Papers*, ii. 192. See, too, on the warm personal interest which the King took in pushing on the measures against Wilkes, Walpole's *George III.* iii. 296. According to Almon (who is not a very good authority), No. 45 was in a great measure based upon a conversation about the King's Speech between Pitt and Temple which took place at the house of the latter when Wilkes happened to be calling there.

sometimes guilty of profanity which exceeded even that of the vicious circle in which he lived, but he possessed some qualities which were well fitted to secure success in life. He had a brilliant and ever ready wit, unflagging spirits, unfailing good humour, great personal courage, much shrewdness of judgment, much charm of manner. The social gifts must have been indeed of no common order which half-conquered the austere Toryism of Johnson, extorted a warm tribute of admiration from Gibbon, secured the friendship of Reynolds, and made the son of a London distiller a conspicuous member of the Medmenham Brotherhood, and the favourite companion of the more dissipated members of the aristocracy. It is not probable that he had any serious political convictions, but, like most ambitious men, he threw himself into politics as the easiest method of acquiring notoriety and position, and he expended many thousands of pounds in the venture. He contested Berwick unsuccessfully, but became member for Aylesbury in 1757, and connected himself by a close personal friendship and political alliance with Lord Temple. Having speedily dissipated his own fortune and as much of the fortune of his wife as it was possible by any means to get into his hands, he began to look to office as a means of recruiting his finances, and he had hopes of becoming ambassador at Constantinople, or obtaining the governorship of Canada, but his prospects were blasted by the downfall of the Whigs, and in the beginning of the new reign Bute himself is said to have interfered to defeat one of his applications. He took a prominent part in censuring the King's Speech in 1761, but his speaking was cold and commonplace, and made no impression on the House. The 'North Briton,' however, which he founded in the following year, raised him at once to importance. It had little literary merit beyond a clear and easy style, but it skilfully reflected

and aggravated the popular hatred of the Scotch; it attacked the Court party with an audacity that had been rarely paralleled, and it introduced for the first time into political discussions the practice of printing the names of the chief persons in the State at full length instead of indicating them merely by initials.[1] It soon distanced or silenced all competitors, but no prosecution was directed against it till the accession of Grenville and the publication of No. 45.

The first measure of the Government was to issue a general warrant, signed by Lord Halifax, which, without specifying the names of the persons accused, directed the apprehension of 'the authors, printers, and publishers' of the incriminated number and the seizure of their papers. Under this warrant no less than forty-nine persons were arrested, and the publisher having acknowledged that Wilkes was the author of the paper, he was seized and carried before Lord Halifax, while his drawers were burst open and his papers carried away. He refused to answer any question, protested against the illegality of a warrant in which no name was given, and claimed the privilege of Parliament against arrest, but in spite of every protest he was confined a close prisoner in the Tower, and denied all opportunity of consulting with his friends or even with his solicitor.

Such proceedings at once raised legal and constitutional questions of the gravest kind, and Lord Temple warmly supported Wilkes in vindicating his rights. The attitude of the demagogue was defiant and irritating in the extreme. One of the Secretaries of State was Lord Egremont, whose father had been imprisoned on suspicion of Jacobitism in the last reign. On his committal to the Tower, Wilkes asked to be lodged in the room in which Windham had been confined, or at all

[1] Walpole's *Memoirs of George III.* iii. 164.

events in a room in which no Scotchman had been lodged, if such a room could be found in the Tower. He wrote a letter to his daughter, who was then in a French convent, congratulating her on living in a free country, and sent it open, according to rule, to Lord Halifax. He applied to the Court of Common Pleas for a writ of Habeas Corpus, and when he succeeded in obtaining it, he addressed the Court in a speech in which he complained that he had been 'worse treated than any rebel Scot.' The question of his arrest was fully argued before the Court of Common Pleas, and Chief Justice Pratt and the other judges unanimously pronounced it to be illegal on the ground that parliamentary privilege secured a member of Parliament from arrest in all cases except treason, felony, and actual breach of the peace, and that a libel, though it might tend to produce the latter offence, could not be regarded as itself a breach of the peace. Numerous actions had been brought against the messengers who executed the general warrant by the persons who were arrested, and damages for various amounts were obtained, and two other constitutional points of great importance were decided. Chief Justice Pratt authoritatively, and with something more than judicial emphasis, determined that 'warrants to search for, seize, and carry away papers,' on a charge of libel, were contrary to law. He also expressed his opinion that general warrants issued by the Secretary of State without specifying the name of the person to be arrested were illegal, and this opinion was a few years later confirmed by Lord Mansfield.[1]

[1] Compare *Adolphus*, i. 136, 137. Campbell's *Chancellors*, vi. 370. The legality of general warrants was brought before Mansfield in November 1765. He gave an opinion similar to that of Pratt. In order to avoid a judgment against the Crown on the merits of the case, the Attorney-General admitted a formal objection, and so contrived to be defeated.—Campbell's *Life of Mansfield*, p. 462.

When these decisions were announced, the triumph of the people was unbounded. Wilkes was not only released from imprisonment, but a special jury at Guildhall awarded him 1,000*l.* damages against Mr. Wood, the Under Secretary of State; and Lord Halifax himself, against whom an action was brought, was compelled to resort to the most contemptible legal subterfuges to delay the proceedings. Three great constitutional questions had been decided, and in each case in favour of Wilkes, and the triumph was all the greater because both search warrants and general warrants, which were now pronounced to be illegal, had been undoubtedly frequently made use of since the Revolution. Passions on both sides were aroused to the utmost, and neither party was prepared to desist from the contest. Wilkes reprinted all the numbers of the 'North Briton' in a single volume, with notes establishing in the most conclusive manner the constitutional doctrine that the King's Speech should be regarded simply as the speech of the ministers. He showed that this doctrine had been unequivocally laid down in the two preceding reigns by such statesmen as the Duke of Argyle, Carteret, Shippen, and Pulteney, and that in 1715 the House of Commons had impeached Oxford among other grounds 'for having corrupted the sacred fountain of truth and put falsehoods into the mouth of his Majesty in several speeches made to Parliament.' Lord Egremont died on August 21, 1763, but Wilkes pressed on eagerly his action against Lord Halifax. He wrote to him in a strain of great insolence, accusing him of having robbed his house, and he even made a vain attempt to obtain a warrant to search for the missing documents. The King, on the other hand, dismissed Wilkes from the colonelcy of the Buckinghamshire Militia. It was the duty of Temple, as lord lieutenant of the county, to announce to him the fact, and he did

so in a letter couched in the most complimentary language. Temple was at once deprived of his lord-lieutenancy, and his name was struck off the list of Privy Councillors. The Attorney-General instituted a regular prosecution for libel against Wilkes. He was surrounded by spies, who tracked his every movement and reported to the ministers the names of all who had intercourse with him, and his correspondence was systematically opened in the Post Office.[1]

The struggle was speedily transferred to another sphere. On November 15, 1763, Parliament met, and it soon appeared that a majority of both Houses were determined to pursue Wilkes with the most vindictive perseverance. On the first day of the session he rose to complain of the breach of privilege in his person, but he was anticipated by Grenville, who produced a royal message recapitulating the steps that had been taken and calling the attention of the House to the alleged libel. The House at once responded to the demand, and although the question was at this very time pending before the law courts, it proceeded to adjudicate upon it, voted the forty-fifth number of the 'North Briton' 'a false, scandalous, and seditious libel,' and ordered it to be burnt by the common hangman.[2] Wilkes vainly endeavoured to avert the sentence by declaring that if his privilege was asserted, he was quite ready to waive it and to stand his trial before a jury.

At the same time another weapon for ruining him had been discovered. Wilkes, after his release from the Tower, had set up a private printing press in his own

[1] See much curious evidence of this, *Grenville Papers*, ii. 8, 71, 130, 155–160. In one of his letters to Wilkes, Temple said: 'I am so used to things of this sort at the Post Office, and am so sure that every line I write must be seen, that I never put anything in black and white that might not be read at Charing Cross for all I care.'—*Grenville Papers*, i. 489.

[2] *Parl. Hist.* xv. 1354–1360.

house, and among other documents had printed a parody of the 'Essay on Man' called 'An Essay on Woman,' and also a paraphrase of the 'Veni Creator.' They were anonymous, but the former at least appears to have been partly, if not wholly, composed by Potter, the son of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and one of the colleagues of Wilkes in the Medmenham Brotherhood. Bishop Warburton having recently published Pope's poems with illustrative notes, the parody contained some burlesque notes attributed to the same prelate. Both the 'Essay on Woman' and the imitation of the 'Veni Creator' were in a high degree blasphemous and obscene. Both of them would have been most proper subjects for prosecution had they been published or widely circulated. As a matter of fact, however, the little volume had not been published. Wilkes had not intended to publish it. Its existence was a profound secret, and only thirteen copies had been privately struck off for a few of his most intimate friends. Either by the examination of papers that were seized under the illegal search warrant, or by the treachery of some of Wilkes's old associates who were now connected with the Government, the ministers obtained information of its existence, and one of their agents succeeded, by bribing a printer employed by Wilkes, in obtaining the proof sheets, which on the first night of the session were brought before the House of Lords. As if to mark in the clearest light the nature of the proceeding, the task was entrusted to Lord Sandwich, who had been the intimate friend of Wilkes, who had been, like him, a member of the Medmenham Brotherhood, and who was notorious as one of the most profligate noblemen of his time. Whatever may have been the demerits of the 'Essay on Woman,' no human being could believe in the purity of the motives of Sandwich,[1] and Wilkes

[1] A description of the *Essay on Woman* will be found in a

afterwards even asserted that he was one of the two persons to whom the poem had been originally read.[1] Sandwich discharged his task in a long speech, descanting upon the profligacy of Wilkes in terms which elicited from their common friend Lord De Spencer the pithy comment that he had never before heard the devil preaching. Warburton then rose to complain of a breach of privilege on account of the appearance of his name in the notes, and in language in which the courtier was at least as apparent as the saint, he declared that the blackest fiends in hell would not keep company with Wilkes, and apologised to Satan for comparing Wilkes to him. The House of Lords at once voted the poems a breach of privilege, and a 'scandalous, obscene, and impious libel,' and two days later presented an address to the King demanding the prosecution of Wilkes for blasphemy.[2]

Before this time, however, Wilkes was no longer able to answer for himself. Among the many persons who had been attacked in the 'North Briton' was Martin, a former Secretary to the Treasury, whose corrupt practices at the time of the Peace of Paris have been already noticed. In the debate on November 15, he got up and denounced the writer in the 'North Briton' as 'a coward and a malignant scoundrel,' and on the following day, Wilkes having acknowledged the authorship of the paper, Martin left at his house a

---

contemporary pamphlet denouncing it by a clergyman named Killidge. No genuine copy of the poem is known to exist, though some spurious versions were circulated. The manuscript poem bearing the name which is among the Wilkes papers in the British Museum is certainly not genuine. An elaborate discussion about the authorship and the true version of the poem will be found in Dilke's *Papers of a Critic*.

[1] Walpole to Mann, Nov. 17, 1763. Lord De Spencer was said to have been the other.

[2] Walpole's *George III.* i. 309–312.

challenge to meet him in Hyde Park with pistols within an hour. Wilkes, among whose faults want of courage cannot be reckoned, at once accepted the challenge. Martin, though the challenger, selected the weapon, and it was afterwards stated that during the whole of the eight months that had elapsed since the provocation was given, he had been assiduously practising at firing at a target. Wilkes fell dangerously, it was at first thought mortally, wounded, and he showed an anxiety to shield his adversary from the consequences of the duel, which was a strong proof of the genuine kindness of his nature, and added not a little to his popularity.[1]

It is not surprising that under these circumstances the angry feeling prevailing through the country should have risen higher and higher. Bute was still regarded as the real director of affairs, and the animosity against the Scotch and against the Court was as far as possible from being appeased. In the cyder counties, a crowned ass was led about by a figure attired in a Scotch plaid and decorated with a blue ribbon.[2] At Exeter an effigy of Bute was hung on a gibbet at one of the principal gates, and the mob was so fierce that for a whole fortnight the authorities did not venture to cut it down.[3] When, in obedience to the vote of the House of Commons, an attempt was made to burn the 'North Briton,' the high sheriff and constables were attacked, the obnoxious paper was snatched from the flames, and that evening a jack-boot and petticoat were publicly burnt in a great bonfire at Temple Bar.[4] The Common Council of London voted thanks to the City members for asserting the liberties of their country in the question of general warrants. The decisions of Chief Justice

[1] *Parl. Hist.* xv. 1357–1359.

[2] Walpole's *Memoirs of George III.* i. 280.

[3] Campbell's *Chancellors*, vi. 289.

[4] Walpole's *George III.* i. 330. *Annual Register*, 1763, p. 144.

Pratt in favour of Wilkes raised that judge to the highest point of popularity. The Corporation of Dublin presented him with its freedom, and the example was speedily followed by the City of London and by a great number of other corporations in England. His portrait became the favourite sign of public-houses throughout the country. By the direction of the Corporation of London it was painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds and placed in the Guildhall with an inscription 'in honour of the jealous assertor of English liberty by law.'[1] The blasphemy and obscenity of the poems printed by Wilkes could not be questioned, but the people very reasonably asked whether the private character of Wilkes was at all worse than that of Sandwich, who was the most prominent of his persecutors; and whether there was the least probability that Wilkes would have been prosecuted for immorality if he had not by his defence of liberty become obnoxious to the Court. 'I am convinced,' he himself wrote to the electors of Aylesbury, 'that there is not a man in England who believes that if the "North Briton" had not appeared, the "Essay on Woman" would ever have been called in question.' The hypocrisy, the impudence, the folly of the part taken by Lord Sandwich excited universal derision. The 'Beggar's Opera' was soon after represented at Covent Garden, and in the speech in which Macheath exclaims 'that Jemmy Twitcher should peach me I own surprises me,' the whole audience, by a burst of applause, recognised the application, and the name—which has been perpetuated in the well-known lampoon of Gray—ever after clung to Lord Sandwich, as Horace Walpole says, 'almost to the disuse of his title.'[2] The

[1] *Annual Register*, 1764, p. 51. *Campbell*, vi. 372.

[2] Walpole's *George III.* i. 314. 'It is a mercy,' wrote Chesterfield, 'that Wilkes, the intrepid defender of our rights and liberties, is out of danger; and it is no less a mercy that God hath

circumstances of the duel with Martin were such that it was commonly regarded as little less than a deliberate conspiracy by the ministry to murder Wilkes, and Churchill embodied the popular sentiment in 'The Duellist,' one of the most powerful of his satires.

Wilkes recovered slowly, but in the mean time the Parliament, rejecting his petition that further proceedings might be delayed till his recovery, pushed on its measures with vindictive energy, and its first step was one of very considerable constitutional importance. Hitherto it had been the steady and invariable policy of the House of Commons to extend as far as possible the domain of Privilege. The doctrine that no member of Parliament could be arrested or prosecuted without the express permission of the House, except for treason, felony, or actual breach of the peace, or for refusal to pay obedience to a writ of Habeas Corpus, had hitherto been fully acknowledged, and had, as we have seen, been very recently admitted by the law courts. In spite of the opposition of Pitt and of a powerful protest signed by seventeen peers, a resolution was now carried through both Houses 'that privilege of Parliament does not extend to the case of writing and publishing seditious libels, nor ought to be allowed to obstruct the ordinary course of the laws in the speedy and effectual prosecution of so heinous and dangerous an offence.' As the resolution was given a retrospective application, the proceeding of the House in this as in most other points was grossly and transparently unjust; but considered in itself it had a great value, as making a serious breach in that formidable edifice of parliamentary privilege which was threatening to become almost as prejudicial as the royal prerogative to the liberty of

raised up the Earl of Sandwich to vindicate and promote true religion and morality. These two blessings will justly make an epocha in the annals of this country.'

the subject. It is a singularly curious fact that at a time when parliamentary privilege was becoming a chief subject of popular complaint, this great concession was made, not in consequence of any pressure of opinion from without, but by the free will of Parliament itself, for the purpose of crushing a popular hero. It is hardly less curious that nearly at the same time the City of London, which had placed itself at the head of the democratic movement, should more than once, through its dislike to particular measures, have petitioned the King to exercise his dormant power of veto, and refuse his assent to Bills which had passed through both Houses of Parliament.[1]

Wilkes was unable to attend Parliament before the Christmas vacation, and during the recess he went over to France. Whether he really intended to return is doubtful. The Crown, the ministers, and the majority in both Houses of Parliament, were all leagued against him, and it was tolerably clear that they were determined to ruin him. A trial for seditious libel and a trial for blasphemy were hanging over his head, and Parliament had already passed resolutions prejudging his case. His life was by no means safe. He had offended large classes, and he was surrounded by vindictive enemies. One of the earliest numbers of the 'North Briton' had obliged him to fight a duel with Lord Talbot, who had officiated as High Constable at the Coronation. On a former visit to Paris he had been challenged by a Scotchman named Forbes, who was in the French service, on account of his attacks upon Scotland. The duel with Martin bore all the signs of a deliberate and premeditated attempt to destroy him; and when he was lying wounded and

[1] It presented petitions to this effect against both the Cyder Bill and the Quebec Bill.

helpless on his sick bed, a mad Scotchman named Dun had tried to penetrate into his house to assassinate him. When the time came at which he was summoned to appear before Parliament, he sent a certificate signed by two French doctors, stating that he was unable to travel. The House of Commons, however, made no allowance for his state. On the 19th of January, 1764, he was expelled from the House for having written 'a scandalous and seditious libel,' and on the 21st of February he was tried and found guilty in the Court of King's Bench for reprinting No. 45, and also for printing the 'Essay on Woman;' and as he did not appear to receive sentence, he was at once outlawed. The most important of the actions brought by Wilkes had been that against Lord Halifax. By availing himself of every possible legal technicality, Halifax had hitherto postponed the decision, and now by pleading the outlawry of Wilkes he terminated the affair.

The Court had triumphed; but no one who knew the English people could doubt that the manifest desire of those in power to hunt down an obnoxious politician, would rouse a fierce spirit of opposition in the country. No minister, indeed, was ever more destitute than George Grenville of that which in a free country is the most essential quality of a successful statesman—the power of calculating the effect of measures upon opinion. Every step which had been taken in the Wilkes controversy was ill advised, vindictive, and substantially unjust. The Government had been formally convicted, on broad legal issues, of illegal conduct. They had resorted to the most disreputable artifices of legal chicanery in order to avert the consequences of the decision, and they had carried with them a great majority of Parliament, in usurping the functions and defying the sentences of the law

courts. The Executive and the Legislature were alike discredited, and a most alarming spirit had been raised. For Wilkes personally there was not much genuine sympathy, and he was still far from the height of popularity which he subsequently attained. Churchill, indeed, predicted that—

> An everlasting crown shall twine
> To make a Wilkes and Sidney join.[1]

But Pitt, who represented far more truly the best liberal sentiments of the country, while taking a foremost part in opposition to the unconstitutional proceedings of the Government, denounced his character and his writings in the strongest terms, and it is remarkable that an attempt to raise a public subscription for him was a failure,[2] and that Kearsley, the publisher of the 'North Briton,' became bankrupt in 1764.[3] A Devonshire farmer in that year left Wilkes 5,000*l.* as a testimony of his admiration;[4] and he was always received with abundance of mob applause, but as yet the general public appear to have given him little support except by riots. His law expenses were chiefly paid by Temple, and he afterwards obtained an annuity of 1,000*l.* from the Rockingham Whigs, who supported him in much the same way as the Tories under Queen Anne had supported Sacheverell. But the spirit of riot and insubordination was very strong in the country, and it was noticed after the Wilkes case that it was ominously and rapidly extending. Libels attacking in the grossest manner the King, the Princess Dowager, and the ministry, were extremely common, and they were fiercely resented. In 1764 no less than 200 in-

---

[1] *The Duellist.*

[2] *Grenville Papers*, ii. 138, 142. See, too, Mr. Rae's *Wilkes, Sheridan, and Fox*, p. 69.

[3] *Annual Register*, 1764, p. 113.

[4] Ibid. p. 91.

formations were filed against printers. In the whole thirty-three years of the preceding reign there had not been so many prosecutions of the Press.[1] Hitherto, when the author of a libel was known, he alone was prosecuted; but the custom was now introduced, for the first time since the Revolution, of involving in these cases the printers also in the prosecution.[2] The finances of the country were managed with an increased economy, and corruption had somewhat diminished; but Shelburne and Barré were deprived of their military posts, and Generals Conway and A'Court of their regiments, on account of their votes in Parliament. No such act had been perpetrated since Walpole had dismissed the Duke of Bolton and Lord Cobham from the commands of their regiments; and it was remembered that at that time Grenville had been one of the most prominent members in denouncing the act in the House of Commons, while Bedford had signed a protest against it in the House of Lords.

Nor were the other proceedings of the Government fitted to add to their popularity. Their tame acquiescence in the Spanish refusal to pay the Manilla ransom offended bitterly the national pride. The Stamp Act, which was imposed on America in 1765, in order to obtain 100,000*l.* of revenue, though it passed almost unnoticed in England, produced an immediate explosion in America, and led in a few years to the dismemberment of the empire. Bedford, who joined the ministry in the autumn of 1763 as President of the Council, brought with him a great weight of personal unpopularity which his subsequent conduct had no tendency to diminish. Perhaps the only valuable measure that can be ascribed to this

[1] Walpole's *Memoirs of George III.* ii. 15.

[2] See a remarkable letter 'Concerning libels, warrants, and the seizure of papers,' ascribed to Dunning, in Almon's *Scarce and Rare Tracts*, i. 102.

ministry is the annexation to the English Crown of the Isle of Man. Its sovereignty had long been vested in the House of Derby, who did honorary service for it by presenting two falcons to the kings and queens of England on their coronation. It passed by marriage to the Dukes of Athol, and the island had been the centre of a great smuggling trade to England and Ireland, which it was found impossible to repress till the Grenville ministry in 1765 purchased the sovereignty for 70,000*l.*[1]

The party aspect of the ministry of Grenville and Bedford was somewhat ambiguous. Bedford, who was one of its leading members, was the head of a great Whig house. Grenville had begun public life as an undoubted Whig; he had never abjured the name, and he always exhibited that high sense of the prerogative and power of the House of Commons which usually accompanied Whig politics. He felt towards it as men feel towards the sphere in which they are most fitted to excel; and in different periods of his career he maintained its authority with equal energy against the Crown, against the colonies, and against the people. At the same time there was some undoubted truth in the assertion of Pitt, that this Government 'was not founded on true Revolution principles, but was a Tory administration.'[2] It was not simply that Grenville had seceded from the great body of the Whig party, that he had supported the ascendency of the Tory Bute, that he advocated with the Tory party the speedy termination of the French war, that his leaning on almost every question was strongly towards the assertion of authority. It is also certain that he came into office with the definite object of carrying into action the Tory principle of government. The real and essential distinction between the two parties at this period of their history lay in the different degrees

[1] *Annual Register*, 1764, p. 92; 1765, pp. 96, 97. 262.
[2] *Grenville Papers*, ii. 199.

of authority they were prepared to concede to the Sovereign. According to the Whigs, a connected group of political leaders acting in concert and commanding a majority in both Houses of Parliament, ought virtually to dictate and direct the government of the country. According to the opposite party, the supreme directing power should reside with the Sovereign, and no political organisation should be suffered to impose its will upon the Crown. According to the Whigs, the system of government which prevailed in the last years of George II., whatever might have been the defects of particular statesmen or of particular measures, was on the whole the normal and legitimate outcome of parliamentary government. According to the Tories, it was essentially an usurpation, and it should be the great object of a loyal minister to prevent the possibility of its recurrence. Both parties recognised the necessity of establishing some strong and permanent system of government, but the one party sought it in the connection of agreeing politicians, commanding parliamentary influence; the other party sought it in the creation of a powerful parliamentary interest attached personally to the Sovereign, reinforced by disconnected politicians, and by small groups drawn from the most various quarters, and directed by a statesman who was personally pleasing to the King. Other questions were for the most part casual and incidental, but this lay at the root of the division of parties, and it is the key to the language which was constantly used about breaking up parties, removing disqualifications, admitting politicians of all kinds to the service of the King. Grenville avowedly came into office to secure the King from falling into the hands of the Whig organisation and losing the power of political guidance.[1]

[1] 'We entered into the King's service . . . to hinder the law from being indecently and unconstitutionally given to him.'—*Grenville*

He was in many respects peculiarly pleasing to the King. His official connection with Bute, his separation from the great Whig families, his unblemished private character, his eminent business faculties, his industry, his methodical habits, his economy, his freedom alike from the fire and the vagaries of genius, his dogged obstinacy, his contempt for popularity, were all points of affinity. Again and again during the first months of the ministry the King spoke of him with the warmest affection, and he declared that 'he never could have anybody else at the head of his Treasury who would fill that office so much to his satisfaction.'[1] In the chief lines of their policy King and ministers cordially agreed. The King had himself, as we have seen, directed the prosecution of Wilkes; he warmly supported the Stamp Act, and the disastrous project of coercing the colonies; he both approved of and counselled the unconstitutional measure of depriving officers of their military rank on account of their votes in Parliament.[2]

But Grenville was placed in office to act the part of a pliant and convenient tool, and nature had given him the character of the most despotic and obstinate of masters. Whatever might be his principles or his professions, his Sovereign soon discovered that no one was constitutionally more fond of power, less disposed to yield to pressure from without, less capable of making harsh decisions palatable to others. There is something at once whimsical and pathetic in the efforts of the young King to free himself from the yoke. In April 1763 Grenville became Prime Minister. In July we already find the King and Bute consulting on the pos-

Papers, ii. 16. 'I told his Majesty that I came into his service to preserve the constitution of my country and to prevent any undue and unwarrantable force being put upon the Crown. (Ibid. p. 106. See, too, a remarkable letter of Sir John Phillips to Grenville, ibid. p. 118.)

[1] Ibid. ii. 192. See, too, pp. 205, 493, 495, 500.

[2] Ibid. pp. 162, 166, 223, 224.

sibility of displacing him. A negotiation was accordingly opened with Lord Hardwicke, but he refused to take any part without the co-operation of Pitt and of the Whigs. In August, when the death of Lord Egremont had weakened the Tory element in the Cabinet, and strengthened the ascendency of Grenville, the King and Bute at once renewed their designs, and on the return of Grenville from a brief excursion in the country he found the King closeted with Pitt. The negotiation, however, again failed. Pitt insisted on the expulsion from office of those who had taken a leading part in negotiating the peace, and the restoration to office of the great Whig families, and the King, who dreaded this consummation above all others, was compelled to ask Grenville to continue in office. He did so on the assurance that Bute was no longer to exercise any secret influence; and he was bitterly indignant when he learnt that two or three days after the King had given this assurance, Bute had made through the instrumentality of Beckford a new attempt to obtain more favourable terms from Pitt. The King then considering the Grenville ministry the sole barrier against the Whig families, changed his policy, determined to support it, and resolved to strengthen it by a junction with the Bedford faction. The unpopularity of Bedford in the country was only second to that of Bute, and his blunt manner and domineering character were sure to bring him into conflict with the King, but he had at least quarrelled with the main body of the Whigs, and he could bring some votes and some administrative skill to the support of the Government. Bute accordingly applied to Bedford, who contented himself with recommending the King to apply to Pitt. The advice was taken; but Pitt, who was not informed of the intervention of Bedford, again urged the formation of a Whig ministry and the exclusion of the chief negotiators of the peace, and

especially of Bedford. The King at once made a skilful but most dishonourable use of the incautious frankness of Pitt in the closet to sow dissensions among the Whig nobles, reporting to each such expressions as were most likely to offend them, and especially instructing Lord Sandwich to inform Bedford that Pitt had made his exclusion from all offices an essential condition. Bedford, who had himself advised the King to apply to Pitt, and who was probably perfectly unaware that Pitt was ignorant of that fact, was naturally greatly incensed, and through resentment he was induced to join the ministry as President of the Council, while Lord Sandwich, who was his oldest follower, became Secretary of State, Lord Hillsborough President of the Board of Trade, and Lord Egmont First Lord of the Admiralty.[1]

The junction of the Bedford faction with the ministry took place in September 1763. In the same month Lord Shelburne had resigned his position as President of the Board of Trade. Shelburne had hitherto been the most devoted follower of Bute; he entered the Grenville ministry by the favour and as the warmest friend of Bute,[2] and he had thoroughly identified himself with his theory of government. It was the object of Bute to reduce each minister as much as possible to his own department, and to absolve him from allegiance to his colleagues, in order that the King should have full power to modify the composition of his Cabinet. In the summer of 1763, when the King was resolved to displace Grenville, he had at once applied to Bute, and under the instructions of the favourite, the President of the Board of Trade took a prominent part in the secret

---

[1] See Harris's *Life of Hardwicke*, vol. iii. *Grenville Papers*, ii. 83–97, 104–107, 191–206. *Bedford Correspondence*, vol. iii. Walpole's *George III.*

[2] See the correspondence between Bute and Shelburne.—Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne*, i. 273–278.

negotiations both with Bedford and with Pitt for the purpose of displacing and overthrowing the Prime Minister.[1] Such services showed how fully Shelburne entered into the spirit of the designs of Bute; but he was himself rapidly becoming discontented. He appears to have disliked both his office and his colleagues; he doubted or more than doubted the legality of the measures that were taken against Wilkes, and he seems to have thought that his own influence and importance were not sufficiently recognised. How far his motives were of a public and how far they were of a private nature it is impossible to say, but on September 3 he resigned his post, and he afterwards voted with his followers Barré, Fitzmaurice, and Calcraft against the Court and the ministry. The King in bitter anger deprived him of his post of aide-de-camp, and Barré of the posts of Adjutant-General of the Forces and Governor of Stirling Castle; and from this time Shelburne severed himself from Bute and attached himself to what seemed to be the rising fortunes of Pitt.[2]

The junction of Bedford had, however, given some strength to the ministry, and although Bedford complained that he had not a sufficient share in the disposition of places, the year 1764, during which the country was convulsed by the Wilkes riots, was a year of comparative peace in the closet. The King, however, detested the hard and overbearing character of Bedford; he disliked the notorious profligacy of Sandwich,[3] and

---

[1] Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne*, i. 281–289.

[2] See the detailed account of this event in Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne*. Walpole said: 'Many reasons are given [for the resignation], but the only one that people choose to take is, that thinking Pitt must be minister soon, and finding himself tolerably obnoxious to him, he is seeking to make his peace at any rate.'—Walpole to Mann, Sept. 13, 1763.

[3] 'The King speaks daily with more and more averseness to Lord Sandwich, and appears to have a settled dislike to his cha-

although for some months he appeared reconciled to Grenville and often expressed warm esteem for him, he soon began to hate him as intensely as the last king had hated Lord Temple. In truth, Grenville was in the closet the most tedious, prolix, and obstinate of men, and his domineering and overbearing temper was shown in the smallest matters. 'When he has wearied me for two hours,' said the King on one occasion, 'he looks at his watch to see if he may not tire me for one hour more.' He refused a grant of 20,000*l.* for the purchase of some grounds adjoining Buckingham Palace, which the King was very anxious to secure in order to prevent buildings that would overlook him in his walks. He adopted so imperious a tone that the King complained that 'when he had anything proposed to him, it was no longer as counsel, but what he was to obey.'[1] His management of the Regency Bill was a much graver offence, and it wounded the King in his most sensitive points. In April 1765 the King was attacked with an alarming illness, and it was afterwards known that symptoms then for the first time appeared of that mental derangement which clouded the latter years of his reign. On his recovery it was thought right to provide against the confusion which might result from the death or illness of the King while his children were still young, and a Regency Bill was accordingly introduced

racter.'—*Grenville Papers*, ii. 496. The King would have deserved more credit for his feelings about Sandwich if he had ever shown reluctance to employ bad men who were subservient to his views. When remonstrated with for employing such a man as Fox, his answer was, 'We must call in bad men to govern bad men.'—Ibid. i. 452. In 1778, when North was very anxious to resign and when there was a question of reconstructing the administration on a Whig basis, the King declared that he would accept no ministry in which some politicians he mentioned had not seats in the Cabinet, and among these politicians was Sandwich.—*Letters of George III. to Lord North*, ii. 158.

[1] *Grenville Papers*, iii. 213.

in which it was proposed to restrict the right of becoming regent to the Queen and the royal family then residing in England; but when in the course of the discussion in the House of Lords the question arose who constituted the royal family, it appeared that the Cabinet had not agreed upon or even considered the subject. Bedford and Halifax, actuated probably by antipathy to Bute, maintained, in opposition to their own colleague the Chancellor, that the term Royal Family did not include the Princess Dowager. Bedford opposed and threw out a resolution inserting the name of the princess, and Halifax and Sandwich succeeded in extorting from the King his consent to a clause limiting the regency to the Queen and the descendants of the late King usually resident in England, and thus pointedly excluding his mother.

Much obscurity hangs over the motives which induced the King to consent to this insult to a parent to whom he was tenderly attached, but it appears that the affair was transacted in great haste, that the King hardly understood or realised what he was doing, and that he was persuaded by Halifax that if the princess were not indirectly excluded in the Bill, the House of Commons would take the still stronger and more insulting step of excluding her by name. At all events, he soon bitterly repented, and even implored Grenville as a personal favour to himself to include the princess in the Bill, and the matter became still worse when the House of Commons, instead of displaying the spirit which Halifax had predicted, inserted her name on the ground that the omission was a direct insult offered by the King's servants to the King's mother. The King was driven to the verge of madness by the false position in which he was placed.[1] In April, when the Regency

[1] Burke—who had not yet entered Parliament—wrote at this

question was still pending, he had been negotiating with his uncle the Duke of Cumberland, and also with Bute, about a possible change of government, and on May 6 he implored Cumberland to save him from a ministry which had become intolerable to him.[1] He had, no truer or more loyal subject, but because Cumberland had lately been in opposition to Bute all his services to the dynasty had been forgotten, and the King had looked on him with the most vindictive hatred. A few months before, the Duke had been struck down by apoplexy, and his life was in imminent danger; but the King, though perfectly aware of the condition of his uncle, refused even to send to inquire after him, 'because,' as he explained to Grenville, 'after the Duke's behaviour, no one could suppose he would inquire out of regard to him.'[2] Yet it was to this prince that the King now resorted in his distress. The ministers had been for some time aware that the King had lost confidence in them, and that some change of government was contemplated, and on

time to Flood: 'The Regency Bill has shown such want of concert and want of capacity in the ministers, such inattention to the honour of the Crown, if not such a design against it, such imposition and surprise upon the King, and such a misrepresentation of the disposition of Parliament to the Sovereign, that there is no doubt that there is a fixed resolution to get rid of them all (except perhaps Grenville), but principally of the Duke of Bedford.'—*Burke Correspondence*, i. 79, 80. The best account of the management of the Regency Bill is in the *Grenville Papers*, iii., especially the very interesting Diary of G. Grenville, pp. 112–222. The interview at which the King consented to the exclusion of his mother was on May 3. He immediately after felt that he had committed an impropriety, and his opinion was strengthened by the Chancellor, who assured him that many people were offended at it, and that a motion against it would be made by the Opposition. On the 5th, the King 'in the utmost degree of agitation and emotion, even to tears,' implored Grenville to alter the Bill, but he was unable to prevail.—Ibid. pp. 152–155.

[1] See Cumberland's own statement.—Albemarle's *Life of Rockingham*, i. 185–203. On the 27th of April the King had an interview with Bute at Richmond.—*Grenville Papers*, iii. 134.

[2] Ibid. ii. 490.

May 9 the Duke of Bedford remonstrated in no measured terms with his master on the treachery of his conduct.[1] Cumberland was authorised to negotiate with Pitt and with the old Whig families whose exclusion the King had so ardently desired, but who probably appeared less dangerous when allied with a statesman who was in many respects hostile to their system. Pitt seemed ready to assume office, and the Whig families to co-operate with him; but Temple, who had lately been reconciled to Grenville, and who probably desired a purely family ministry, declined the office of First Lord of the Treasury, and persuaded Pitt to break off the negotiation. Pitt did so chiefly on the ground that the influence of Bute was as strong as ever, and overrode that of the responsible ministers of the Crown.[2] An attempt was then made to induce Lord Lyttelton to form a government, but this, too, speedily failed.

A serious riot about this time complicated the situation. The silk weavers, being in great distress, had petitioned for the exclusion of all French silks from England, and they resented bitterly the terms in which Bedford opposed the measure. On May 15 a great body of them bearing black flags followed the King to the House of Lords, broke the chariot of the Duke of Bedford, wounded him on the hand and on the temple, and two days later attacked Bedford House with such fury that a large body of soldiers was required to save it from destruction. The episode was peculiarly unfortunate, for it gave the impending change of ministry the appearance of a concession to mob violence. Bedford absurdly ascribed the riot to the instigation of Bute, and lost no opportunity of showing his anger.[3]

---

[1] *Grenville Papers*, iii. 159, 160. *Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 279–281.

[2] See the letter of the Duke of Cumberland, May 21, 1765.—Albemarle's *Life of Rockingham*, i. 211.

[3] Walpole's *Memoirs of George*

In the meantime the King had intimated clearly to his ministers his determination to dispense with their services, and they held office only till their places were filled; but Cumberland was soon obliged to recommend his nephew to recall them.[1] The humiliation was almost intolerable, but it was undergone. Grenville insisted on a solemn promise from the King that he would never again have a private interview with Bute. He insisted upon the dismissal of Stewart Mackenzie, the brother of Bute, from the sinecure office of Privy Seal in Scotland, though the King had distinctly pledged his honour that he should retain it. He lectured the King again and again on the duplicity he had shown. His Majesty, on the other hand, was at no pains to conceal his sentiments. He displayed the most marked courtesy towards the leaders of the Opposition, listened with a dark and sullen countenance to the expostulations of his ministers, and when they ventured to express a hope that he would accord them his confidence he preserved a blank and significant silence without even the courtesy of a civil evasion. When an appointment was to be made he studiously neglected their wishes, and often filled it up without even informing them of his choice. Bedford, three weeks after the Government had been restored, demanded an audience, and calmly read to the King a paper formally accusing him of acting towards his ministers with a want of confidence and sincerity utterly incompatible with consti-

---

III. ii. 155–159. *Grenville Papers*, iii. 171.

[1] I have compiled this account from the memorial of the Duke of Cumberland describing the negotiations with which he was entrusted, which is printed in Albemarle's *Life of Rockingham*, the 'Diary' of George Grenville in the *Grenville Papers*, and the account given by Walpole. These three accounts are not in all points quite coincident, and some of the dates in the Duke of Cumberland's memorial appear to be wrongly given.

tutional monarchy. 'If I had not broken into a profuse sweat,' the King afterwards said, 'I should have been suffocated with indignation.' Once more he resorted to Cumberland and empowered him to offer the most liberal terms to Pitt. A ministry directed by that great statesman would have been beyond all comparison the most advantageous to the country; it had no serious difficulty to encounter, and Pitt himself was now ready to undertake the task, but the evil genius of Lord Temple again prevailed. Without his co-operation Pitt could not or would not proceed, and Temple absolutely refused to take office even in the foremost place. The King, however, would not fall back on Grenville. Yielding for a time what had long been the main object of his policy, he authorised the Duke of Cumberland to enter into negotiations with the great Whig families.[1] A communication was made to the old Duke of Newcastle, and in July 1765, after about seven weeks of almost complete administrative anarchy, the main body of the Whigs returned to office under their new leader Lord Rockingham. Of Grenville, the King in after years sometimes spoke with regret and appreciation, but he never forgot or forgave the last months of his ministry. 'I would sooner meet Mr. Grenville,' he is reported to have said, 'at the point of my sword than let him into my Cabinet.' 'I had rather see the devil in my closet than George Grenville.'[2]

Of Rockingham, the new minister, there is little to be said. A young nobleman of very large fortune and unblemished character, he had been for some time only remarkable for his passion for horse-racing, but had obtained a faint glimmer of notoriety when he resigned

[1] See the *Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 283, 284, 286-290, 293-295. Walpole's *George III.* *Grenville Papers*, iii. Albemarle's *Life of Rockingham.*

[2] Albemarle's *Life of Rockingham*, ii. 50.

his office of First Lord of the Bedchamber and was dismissed from the lord-lieutenancy of his county for his opposition to the peace, and he was selected by the Whigs as their leader mainly on account of his property and connections, but partly on account of his conciliatory manners and high character. He was almost absolutely destitute of the ordinary power of expressing his opinions in debate, but his letters show a clear, moderate, and sound judgment, and he had considerable tact in smoothing difficulties and managing men. He carried out a steadily liberal policy with great good sense, a perfectly single mind, and uniform courtesy to opponents. He had the advantage of following one of the most unpopular of ministers, and the genius of Burke, who was his private secretary, and who was brought into Parliament by his influence, has cast a flood of light upon his administration and imparted a somewhat deceptive splendour to his memory.

Few English statesmen of the highest rank have been more destitute of all superiority of intellect or knowledge. Few English ministries have been more feeble than that which he directed, yet it carried several measures of capital importance. It obtained from Parliament—what the former ministry had steadily resisted—a formal condemnation of general warrants. By restoring to their posts the officers who had been deprived of their military rank for their votes in Parliament, it affixed such a stigma to that practice that it never was repeated. It allayed the discontent and even disloyalty of large classes of the English people by abolishing or at least profoundly modifying the obnoxious Cyder Act, and by the more doubtful measure of prohibiting the importation of French silks. It negotiated a beneficial commercial treaty with Russia; it was the first ministry since that of Walpole which took serious measures to relax the commercial restrictions which were the true

cause of the alienation of the colonies; and above all, by repealing the Stamp Act, it for a time averted the struggle which soon afterwards brought about the disruption of the Empire. It did all this in the short space of one year and twenty days, in spite of every kind of opposition from within and from without, and, as far as can be ascertained, without resorting to any of the corrupt practices that had been so common among its predecessors. It was essentially a ministry of great families. The Duke of Newcastle brought to it his vast experience, his industry and influence, and he exerted himself with laudable zeal for the repeal of the Stamp Act. It was characteristic of the habits of the old minister that the Church patronage was at his desire specially attached to the office of Privy Seal, which he held, and it is scarcely less characteristic of another side of his character that he anxiously warned Rockingham against Burke, whom he suspected of being a Jacobite and a Papist in disguise.[1] In party politics the leading idea of Newcastle at this time was dread of Pitt, and the great object at which he ineffectually aimed was a junction between the followers of Rockingham and Bedford. The great family connection of the Cavendishes, and many other Whig nobles distinguished only for their wealth and position, joined the ministry, which represented all that remained unbroken and unchanged of the powerful party which in the last two reigns had governed the country.

But in spite of aristocratic support the ministry had no real strength, and it soon perished by the combination of many enemies. Death had greatly thinned the ranks of Whig administrators, and the secession of Grenville and Bedford, the alienation of Pitt and of Temple, had thrown the management of the party into

[1] Prior's *Life of Burke*, i. 135.

the hands of young men altogether inexperienced in government, mixed with two or three worn-out veterans: Rockingham, who should have led the party in the House of Lords, rarely opened his mouth in debate; Conway, who led the party in the Commons, was a brave and popular soldier, who had served with distinction at Culloden, Fontenoy, and Laffeldt, and had commanded a corps under Prince Ferdinand in 1761, but as a parliamentary leader he had neither resolution, knowledge, nor eloquence; Dowdeswell, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was a good financier, but nothing more. Charles Townshend, though he clung to the rich office of Paymaster of the Forces, treated his colleagues with undisguised contempt, described the Government of which he was a member as a 'lutestring administration fit only for summer wear,' and ostentatiously abstained from defending its measures. Northington, the Chancellor, and Barrington, the Secretary for War, were kept in office to please the King, and were completely at his service. They were prepared at any moment to turn against their colleagues, and they were strongly committed to views hostile to those of the Government to which they belonged on the two capital questions of American taxation and the legality of general warrants. Chesterfield very justly described the ministry as an arch which wanted its keystone, and the true keystone was evidently Pitt.[1]

Rockingham had done everything in his power to draw Pitt to his side, but he wholly failed. Pitt remained persistently isolated from all other politicians. While admitting that the characters of the new ministers were good, he openly declared in Parliament that

[1] Lord Lyttelton wrote at this time (Jan. 28, 1765): 'The desire of Mr. Pitt in the public is inexpressibly strong, and nothing will satisfy them without him. I believe he is also much desired in the Court.'—Phillimore's *Life of Lyttelton*, ii. 683.

he could not give them his confidence, and he countenanced a charge which is now known to have been completely groundless, but which was believed by both Temple and Bedford,[1] that Bute was exercising a controlling influence upon their counsels. While Pitt maintained this attitude the ministry could have no genuine popularity; and the Duke of Cumberland, who had called it into power, and who warmly supported it, died at the end of October, about three months before the Old Pretender, the son of James II., whose prospects he had ruined at Culloden.

To a truly constitutional sovereign there was no reason why the Rockingham ministry should not have been acceptable. It consisted to an exaggerated extent of members of those great families who are naturally brought into closest contact with the Throne. It was studiously moderate in its policy, and none of its members were ever accused of the slightest disrespect. But to George III. its very existence was an intolerable humiliation to be endured only from extreme necessity. Only two years had elapsed since the King had authorised Bute to declare that he would never again during his whole reign admit the great Whig connection to power. The Duke of Devonshire, who was one of the chief supporters of the Government, was the son of the very statesman who had so lately been dismissed from office by the King in a manner which amounted to little less than personal insult. The King had been the first man to suggest the dismissal of Conway from his civil and military posts. He was now obliged to restore Conway to his regiment, and to accept him as Secretary of State and leader of the House of Commons. He had vehemently supported the most violent measures against Wilkes, but he now saw general warrants and the

[1] *Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 304, 305, 312.

seizure of the papers of supposed libellers formally condemned in Parliament by resolutions introduced under the auspices of his ministers, and he was obliged to raise Chief Justice Pratt to the peerage as Lord Camden. The repeal of the American Stamp Act was contrary to the strongest wishes of the King. In order to make it possible it was accompanied by a declaratory Act asserting the abstract right of the Imperial Parliament to tax the colonies. Grenville, Bedford, and the whole party of Bute bitterly opposed the repeal, while Pitt denounced the declaration that accompanied it. The debates were long and vehement, and they were especially noteworthy on account of two speeches in defence of the Government, which extorted warm eulogy from Pitt, and in the words of Dr. Johnson 'filled the town with wonder.' They were the first parliamentary speeches of Edmund Burke.

The King soon made no secret of his hostility to the measures of his ministers. He assured those who held offices in his household that they were at full liberty to vote against the minister, and Lord Strange was authorised to spread about the report that the King was opposed to the repeal of the Stamp Act. Rockingham, who understood the character of his Sovereign, heard of it, and at once insisted upon obtaining in writing the consent of the King, which he showed to those who desired it; but place-hunters knew only too well the real wishes of the King and the weakness of the Government. It was the evil custom of the time to treat the adjudication of disputed elections as party questions, to be decided according to the majority in the House and not according to the merits of the case. On a question of a Scotch election in February 1766, the ministers only carried their candidate by eleven votes, and on the following day they were beaten in the Lords

by a majority of three.[1] Many attempts were made to induce isolated politicians to join the ministry, but they uniformly failed, and it was generally felt that its days were numbered.[2] A motion of Grenville to enforce the Stamp Act was rejected by 274 to 134, but it was remarkable that the minority included not only the friends of Bute, but also nearly a dozen of the King's household.[3] The Chancellor and the Secretary of War both voted against the repeal of the Stamp Act.[4] Rockingham wished to restore some vigour and discipline to the ministry by removing Jeremiah Dyson, one of the undertreasurers, who had been in conspicuous opposition to his chief, but the King positively refused. He had indeed two measures. When a ministry represented his personal views, Walpole himself was not more strenuous in enforcing unanimity among its members. When it diverged from his views, Pelham was not more indulgent of dissent. In the same spirit the King refused to create a single peer at the desire of his ministers. The King's friends, who filled the subordinate places in the Government, plotted incessantly and voted fearlessly against their chief. At last, in May 1766, the Duke of Grafton struck the death-blow by resigning the seals of Secretary of State. 'He had no objection,' he said, 'to the persons or the measures of the ministers, but he thought they wanted strength and efficiency to carry on proper measures with success, and that Pitt alone could give them solidity.' In July, the Chancellor, Lord Northington, who had very persistently thwarted and opposed his colleagues in the Cabinet,

---

[1] Albemarle's *Life of Rockingham*, i. 296.

[2] Thackeray's *Life of Chatham*, ii. 75. *Grenville Papers. Bedford Correspondence. Chatham Correspondence.*

[3] Walpole's *Memoirs of George III.* ii. 287, 288.

[4] Albemarle's *Life of Rockingham*, i. 321. Barrington's *Life of Barrington*, p. 108.

openly revolted, and informed the King that the ministry could not go on. The ministers were dismissed, and on July 7, 1766, the King once more sent for Pitt.

The conduct of Pitt in refusing to join the Rockingham Government, if not the worst, was certainly the most disastrous incident of his career. He had no ground of complaint because Rockingham had taken office, for he had again and again been appealed to during the Grenville ministry to form a Government, and he had absolutely refused. Two months before the Grenville ministry fell, Rockingham had visited him at Hayes, with the object of effecting a junction with him; and when the new ministry was formed, and during the whole period of its existence, every possible effort was made to obtain his alliance. At least three separate applications were made to him by Rockingham. His advice was asked with a marked deference. The restoration of the officers who had been removed from their military posts on account of their votes in Parliament, a formal condemnation of general warrants, and the bestowal of some special honour on Chief Justice Pratt, had been three conditions on which Pitt specially insisted in his abortive negotiations with the King before the fall of the Grenville administration. All of these were carried out by Rockingham. In order still further to conciliate him, Grafton, who was his most devoted follower, was made Secretary of State. His brother-in-law, James Grenville, was offered one of the Vice-Treasurerships of Ireland. Nuthall, who was his confidential lawyer, and one of his most intimate friends, was made Solicitor of the Treasury. It was clearly intimated to Pitt that Rockingham and his colleagues 'were most ready to be disposed of as he pleased,' and he was expressly asked to place himself at their head.[1]

[1] Albemarle's *Life of Rockingham*, i. 312. *Adolphus*, i. 227–230. Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne*, i. 364–371.

He could have entered the Government on what terms he wished, and could without difficulty have converted the Whig party from a struggling minority into the dominant power of the State. The importance of doing so was self-evident. As Pitt himself declared, 'Faction was shaking and corruption sapping the country to its foundations.' The utter disintegration of parties, and the influence of the Crown, now steadily employed in dissolving connections and sowing dissensions, had threatened the very ruin of parliamentary government, had created both at home and in the colonies a mass of disaffection which had hardly been equalled since the accession of the House of Brunswick, had brought Parliament into contempt, and was likely, if any great foreign complication arose, to lead the country to overwhelming disaster.

It has often been said that the democratic character which Parliament has in the present century assumed has weakened the Executive, and produced an excessive number of feeble ministries, but in no period of English history was this evil more conspicuous than in the first years of George III. In less than six years England had been ruled by the united ministry of Pitt and Newcastle, by the ministry of Newcastle alone, by the ministry of Bute, by the ministry of Grenville, and afterwards of Grenville and Bedford, and lastly by that of Rockingham. It was of vital importance to establish once more a system of firm and settled government, resting on an undisputed parliamentary ascendency, and secure from the intrigues of royalty and of faction. This could only be done by a coalition of parties, and the natural lines of combination were very clear. On most important points the followers of Grenville and Bedford agreed with the Tories, and the followers of Pitt with the Whigs. Though Grenville and Bedford had lately proscribed Bute, the political affinity was so strong that

they actually made overtures to him in 1766, which he rejected with much contempt. On the other hand, the junction of Pitt and his followers with the genuine Whigs would have given that party a decisively popular bias, and would have brought to it all the weight, ability, and popularity that were required to give it a commanding power in the State. Its leaders were for the most part men of upright character and of liberal views, and unusually free from the taint of parliamentary corruption. There was little ability in the party, but Charles Townshend only wanted firm guidance to rise very high, and in the still obscure private secretary of Lord Rockingham the ministry could count upon a follower whose genius never indeed exhibited the meteoric brilliancy or the magnetic and commanding power of that of Pitt, but who far surpassed Pitt and all other English politicians in the range of his knowledge, in the depth and comprehensiveness of his judgment, in the sustained and exuberant splendour of his imagination. On nearly all the great questions that were impending, Pitt agreed with Rockingham; he agreed with him about the cyder tax, about general warrants, about the seizure of papers, about the restoration of the military officers who had been removed from their posts for their votes in Parliament, about the necessity of repealing the Stamp Act. The most serious point of difference was the Declaratory Act asserting the right of the English to tax America. But whatever opinion may be held about its abstract truth, it was the only condition on which the great practical measure of the repeal of the Stamp Act could be carried. The Tories, the Grenvilles, the Bedfords, and the King were all bitterly hostile to the Americans. In the ministry itself the Chancellor, Charles Townshend, and Barrington shared their opinion. Lord Mansfield had privately asserted that as a matter of law the English Parliament

had an undoubted right to tax the colonies. Lord Hardwicke was strongly of the same opinion. Public opinion in the country and in Parliament was exasperated by the resistance of America. Considered abstractedly, it would no doubt have been better if the Stamp Act had been simply and unconditionally repealed, but it is doubtful if any ministry could have carried such a measure; it is quite certain that a weak one could not. The Rockingham Ministry was very weak, and it was weak chiefly through the abstinence of Pitt.

He not only repelled on repeated occasions the overtures of the Whig leaders, but he also shook the ministry to its basis. On some questions, it is true, he cordially supported it. He seconded the resolution of Dowdeswell for remodelling the cyder tax, and he spoke with extraordinary force in favour of repealing the Stamp Act. The ministers, with their usual deference, had carefully consulted his wishes about the repeal,[1] but he openly declared his want of confidence in them. 'Confidence,' he said in a characteristic phrase, 'is a plant of slow growth in an aged bosom; youth is the season of credulity.'

The reasons for his conduct were probably very various. Much must be allowed for a natural character which was morbidly irritable and impracticable, and peculiarly unfit for co-operation with others. 'Nothing,' wrote Burke in May 1765, 'but an intractable temper in your friend Pitt can prevent a most admirable and lasting system from being put together; and this crisis will show whether pride or patriotism be predominant in his character, for you may be assured that he has it now in his power to come into the service of his country upon any plan of politics he may choose to dictate, with great and honourable terms to himself and to every

[1] Albemarle's *Life of Rockingham*, i. 269.

friend he has in the world, and with such a stretch of power as will be equal to everything but absolute despotism over the King and kingdom. A few days will probably show whether he will take this part or that of continuing on his back at Hayes talking fustian.'[1] But Pitt, as Lord Hardwicke once said, would 'neither lead nor be driven.'[2] Constant attacks of gout had prostrated his strength, irritated his nerves to an extraordinary degree, and perhaps produced in him a secret desire to postpone as much as possible a return to office. He was courted on all sides, and personal friendships or antipathies greatly governed him. His friendship with Temple was now rapidly dissolving, but Temple had still much influence over his mind, and it had for some time been steadily employed in alienating him from the great body of the Whigs. The old dislike to Newcastle was also still living, and Pitt declared peremptorily that he could never have 'any confidence in a system where the Duke of Newcastle has influence.'[3] The fear was very unreasonable, for the influence of the old duke was nearly gone, and he professed himself ready to take whatever course Pitt required.

There were, however, a few real differences between Pitt and the Rockingham Ministry. On the capital point of American taxation they differed on the question of right, though they agreed on the question of policy. Pitt disliked the free-trade views of Burke, and the more aristocratic Whigs disliked the City agita-

[1] *Burke's Correspondence*, i. 80.

[2] Albemarle's *Life of Rockingham*, i. 177.

[3] *Chatham Correspondence*, ii. 360; see, too, p. 322. The final rupture seems to have been in Oct. 1764 (ibid. pp. 293–298). On January 9, 1766, the Duke of Newcastle wrote a letter to Rockingham which does the writer great credit, urging that a junction with Pitt was absolutely indispensable to the Government, and that he was himself perfectly ready to resign office in order to facilitate it. — Albemarle's *Life of Rockingham*, i. 264, 265.

tion which Pitt encouraged. It must be added that the impending dissolution of the Rockingham Ministry would almost necessarily throw the chief power into the hands of Pitt, and he probably miscalculated greatly his power of forming a strong ministry.

He was, however, also actuated by another reason, which drew him closer to the King. As we have already seen,[1] from an early period of his career he had rebelled much against the system of party government, and in this respect he sympathised strongly with the doctrines which George III. had imbibed from Bolingbroke. Many expressions in his letters show that his real desire was to remain isolated and unconnected, that he wished to form an administration of able men drawn from every quarter, and that he looked with great dread and irritation to the prospect of family or party influence narrowing ministries as they had been narrowed in the days of Walpole. The cry of the abolition of parties was one which had been raised by the followers of the King at the very beginning of the reign, and it is remarkable that Burke himself, though he became the greatest and most earnest of all the advocates of party government, appears to have listened to it with some momentary favour.[2] That Pitt should have felt such sentiments was very natural. Party government in the latter days of George II. had assumed some of its worst forms. The opponents of the dominant party were regarded as the opponents of the dynasty, and disaffection was thus unnaturally and unnecessarily prolonged. In the absence of strong popular influence corrupt family in-

[1] See above, p. 178.

[2] See a very curious passage in the historical section of the *Annual Register* for 1762. 'From the beginning of this reign it had been professed, with the general applause of all good men, to abolish those odious party distinctions [Whig and Tory] and to extend the royal favour and protection equally to all his Majesty's subjects.'—*Annual Register* 1762, p. [47].

fluence had been inordinately increased, and the amount of ability at the disposal of the Crown very unduly limited. It was natural that a statesman who was conscious of unrivalled genius and of unrivalled popularity, and who had at the same time little family influence and but few personal adherents, should have revolted against the constraints imposed by the organisation of the great Whig families. 'As for my single self,' he wrote to Newcastle in October 1764, 'I purpose to continue acting through life upon the best convictions I am able to form, and under the obligation of principles, not by the force of any particular bargains. . . . I shall go to the House free from stipulations about every question under consideration. . . . Whatever I think it my duty to oppose or to promote, I shall do it independent of the sentiments of others. . . . I have little thoughts of beginning the world again upon a new centre of union. . . . I have no disposition to quit the free condition of a man standing single, and daring to appeal to his country at large upon the soundness of his principles and the rectitude of his conduct.'[1] 'The King's plea-

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, ii. 296, 297. On Feb. 24, 1766, when Rockingham had been making a new indirect overture to Pitt, the latter wrote to Shelburne: 'Lord Rockingham's plan appears to me to be such as can never bring things to a satisfactory conclusion; his tone being that of a minister, master of the Court and of the public, making openings to men who are seekers of offices and candidates for ministry. . . . . In one word, my dear lord [he continued], I shall never set my foot in the closet but in the hope of rendering the King's personal situation not unhappy, as well as his business not unprosperous; nor will I owe my coming thither to any Court cabal or ministerial connection.' —*Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 11, 12. In April 1766, Rigby wrote to the Duke of Bedford that Pitt had made 'a kind of farewell speech,' in which he said 'that he wished for the sake of his dear country that all our factions might cease; that there might be a ministry fixed such as the King should appoint and the public approve . . . that if ever he was again admitted as he had been into the royal presence, it should be independent of any personal connections whatsoever.' —*Bedford Correspondence*, iii.

sure,' he wrote towards the end of the Rockingham ministry, 'and gracious commands alone shall be a call to me. I am deaf to every other thing.'[1] 'As to my future conduct,' wrote his follower Shelburne to Rockingham, 'your lordship will pardon me if I say "measures, not men," will be the rule of it.'[2]

The propriety of discouraging party distinctions, and endeavouring on every occasion to select in a judicial spirit the best man and the wisest measure irrespective of all other considerations, has so plausible a sound that it will appear to many little less than a truism. No reasonable man will question that party government is at best a highly artificial system—so artificial, indeed, that it is scarcely possible that it can be the final or permanent type of government in civilised nations—and that it has many evils and many dangers. It is a great evil that political questions should be decided by the Legislature on a double or a false issue, each member speaking of their intrinsic merits while he is thinking largely of their relation to the well-being of his party. It is a great evil that politicians should be obliged to conceal, or attenuate, or even deny their genuine convictions when on some particular occasion the course which appears to them the wisest is not that which has been adopted by the leaders of their party. It is a great evil in a country in which at least nine out of ten questions have no real connection with party divisions, that men of the greatest administrative ability should for years be excluded absolutely from the

---

333. 'Lord Chatham,' wrote Mitchell in Dec. 1766, 'declares to all the world that his great point is to destroy faction, and he told the House of Lords the other day "that he could look the proudest connection in the face."'—*Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 138.

[1] Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne* i. 382. See, too, his very similar declaration in 1762.—Albemarle's *Life of Rockingham*, i, 151.

[2] *Shelburne's Life*, i. 334.

management of affairs, because the organisation to which they have attached themselves is politically the weakest. Party interests often run counter to national interests, and there is then much danger lest party spirit should weaken national affection. It is not easy for an Opposition, in the full ardour of conflict, to look with unmixed pleasure upon national triumphs that are due to the policy of their opponents, or to deplore very bitterly national calamities that may lead their own side speedily to power. The mixture of party with foreign politics has sometimes led to the gravest calamities, and the deep division which party introduces into the councils of a nation has often weakened it seriously in the hour of danger, diminished the amount of talent and energy available for its service, and induced its enemies to underrate greatly its patriotism and its strength. In a perfect government the management of affairs would be placed in the hands of men who were not only eminent for their ability and their integrity, but who also made it their sole object to do what they thought best for their country. No one can fail to observe how widely party government diverges from this ideal by the inevitable introduction of other and lower motives of political action. Even apart from the necessities of co-operation, and from the desire for place and power, the keen competition of parties generates a kind of sporting interest like fox-hunting or horse-racing, which becomes to many the strongest and most absorbing of political passions. Those who are nearest to the arena, those who are brought into closest contact with the chief actors, are naturally the most susceptible to it, and they are very apt to regard politics as little more than a game played by rival leaders, and every measure as merely a good or bad move in the race for power. Party government thus never fails to introduce a large amount of insincerity and unreality into

politics. When there are two plausible courses to be pursued, the Government takes the one and the Opposition is almost bound to defend the other. The Government have the advantage of the first choice and the most authentic information. The Opposition have the advantage of a somewhat later experience. Whenever any considerable amount of discontent against the conduct of the Government exists in the country, whether it be reasonable or unreasonable, the Opposition is usually practically obliged to constitute itself its representative and exponent.

The gravity of these evils cannot easily be overestimated. A close observer of English political life can hardly fail to feel how rarely even the greatest intellects can preserve their full sanity of judgment in the fierce excitement of a party conflict, and how dangerous it is that public affairs should in critical moments be administered by men in whom that sanity is in any degree impaired. The transition, too, from opposition to power is, under the system of party government, surrounded with some peculiar difficulties. When a party is in opposition the party element in its policy is usually strongly accentuated. Its leaders must maintain specially, keenly, and vividly the interests and opinions of the particular classes that support it. But once it arrives at power its point of view is widely changed. It inherits and must carry out lines of conduct which it had stubbornly opposed; it must preserve the essential continuity of the national policy; it becomes the representative not merely of one section but of all sections of the people, and while it retains the organisation, it must discard or subdue many of the characteristics of a party. The true spirit in which a statesman should guide the government of his country is not that of a missionary, or an advocate, or an avenger, or an experimentalist, but of a trustee. It is his busi-

ness to adapt institutions to the wants of men with opinions or in stages of civilisation widely different from his own; to provide for the well-being of systems with which he has no personal sympathy; to protect interests which he never would have created; to carry out engagements into which he never would have entered. Personal and even party ideals can have only a faint and casual influence upon his policy. The spirit of conflict and the sectional habits of thought which party opposition especially develops must be lowered or must disappear. He must cultivate above all things that form of imagination which reproduces habits of thought and feeling widely different from his own, and realises the conditions of the happiness of men in many different circumstances, of many different types and classes, and with many different beliefs.

At the same time, as I have endeavoured to show in a former chapter, party divisions, though in a large degree artificial, have some real or natural basis, and are in some form or measure the inevitable and almost spontaneous products of representative government. Each party usually represents a special theory of government or doctrine or ideal, which more or less colours a great part of political judgments. Each party is the special representative of different class interests, and reflects with some degree of fidelity different types of character and intellect. As long as these differences exist the system of party must grow up; and its political advantages are very great. No other method has ever been devised which is equally efficacious in securing the fidelity of representatives. A man who would have little scruple in changing his opinions if he were an isolated individual, or in yielding to the blandishments or the temptations of power, will be much less likely to abandon an organised body of men to whom he has pledged his allegiance, and to enter formally into

new connections or alliances. By pledging successive generations to the advocacy of particular measures or to the attainment of some political ideal, the system of party organisation greatly increases the probability of their ultimate triumph, and it also secures the representation in an organised form of the different opinions and class interests of the nation.

But its chief advantages, and those which make it indispensable in parliamentary government, are that it gives administrations some measure of permanence and stability, and that it places the habitual direction of affairs in the hands of competent leaders. A Government depending for its existence on the isolated and unbiassed judgment of some 600 individuals would be an impossibility. It could never count for a week upon its tenure of office. It could never make an engagement for the future. It could never enter into any course of sustained and continuous policy. In order that a Government should faithfully discharge its functions it must have sufficient stability to surmount difficulties, to brave transient unpopularity, to survive occasional blunders. Even if the House of Commons consisted of the six hundred wisest men, a ministry dependent on so many unconnected judgments would be absolutely unfit to conduct the business of the nation; and the more the actual composition of the House is considered the stronger becomes the argument for disciplined political action. The House of Commons usually contains four or five men of extraordinary statesmanlike genius. It contains, perhaps, eighty or ninety others who, from long parliamentary experience, from the education of county or municipal government, or from natural ability improved by reading, are eminently sound judges in politics, and count among their number many men quite capable of conducting departments of government and defending their policy in Parliament.

It contains, also, a few men who, without any general legislative knowledge or capacity, are able, from the circumstances of their lives, to throw great light on special subjects, such as agriculture, military organisation, navigation, the money market, or the condition of India or the colonies. There are also a large number of lawyers who are authorities on technical questions of law, but whose general habits of thought and reasoning are essentially unpolitical, whose time and studies are mainly devoted to another sphere, who usually regard the House of Commons simply as a stepping-stone to professional promotion, but who, on account of their practice in speaking, and of that freedom from diffidence which is a characteristic of their profession, are thrown into an unfortunate prominence. But the great majority of members are perfectly incompetent to conduct independently legislative business, or to form opinions of any value on the many intricate and momentous questions submitted to them. There are landlords or sons of landlords brought into the House on account of the importance of their properties or of their local popularity, who have never made the smallest study of the political conditions of the country, or of the general principles that underlie political questions, who value the House as a pleasant club, and their legislative functions as giving them an honorary leadership in their counties. There are manufacturers the spring and summer of whose days have been wholly spent in amassing wealth, and who, having succeeded in business and obtained the influence which naturally belongs to great employers of labour, aspire in their old age to such social consequence as Parliament can afford. There are place-hunters, demagogues and intriguers whose sole object is to push their fortunes, and who are ready to spread their sails to any breeze, and to adopt any cause which is conducive to their interests. And this strangely

composite assembly has to decide not only questions of home and domestic policy, but also questions of foreign policy of the most delicate description, questions on which accurate and extensive knowledge of circumstances and conditions wholly unlike those of England is imperatively necessary, questions on which the promptest and most decisive action is often required. To suppose that a Government dependent on this great mass of unguided, incompetent, and sometimes dishonest judgments, can act under such circumstances with the requisite intelligence and firmness, or can command the respect and confidence of foreign Governments, is absurd. The sole way of enabling a popular assembly to exercise supreme power with safety is to divide it into great, coherent, disciplined party organisations. When such organisations exist, they will necessarily be directed by the ablest men, who become responsible for their guidance, who can count upon the habitual support of a large body of followers, and who therefore represent a permanent, calculable force in the political world.

These considerations apply to every case in which a Parliament is the most powerful body in the State, though it must be acknowledged that they have a still greater force in our own day than they had under George III. Parliament is now a much larger body. The Irish union added 105 members, and the average attendance of English and Scotch has also been greatly increased. Under the old system so many members had small constituencies completely under their control, and even in large constituencies the means of supervision were so scanty, that a very large proportion of members were usually absent, and public business was practically conducted by a comparatively small body. At the same time, while the average parliamentary attendance has been greatly raised, there has been no cor-

responding elevation of the average of parliamentary ability. Besides this, under the old system, members who were elected were at least free to exercise their judgments. Now great bodies of uneducated constituents, newspaper writers, demagogues, local agitators, are perpetually interfering with each question as it arises, and putting pressure on the judgment of the representatives. Questions of the most difficult foreign policy, involving consequences of the most various, intricate, and far-reaching nature, are treated in great popular agitations by multitudes who have no real feeling of political responsibility, and no detailed and minute knowledge of the subjects on which they are pronouncing. If the domestic and still more the foreign policy of the country is to be at the mercy of these violent gusts of ignorant, irresponsible, interested agitation, nothing but ruin can be predicted; and it is only the firm coherence of party organisation that gives statesmen the power of resisting them. It must be added, too, that Parliament encroaches much more than formerly on the province of the Executive, and meddles much more habitually in the details of measures. For these reasons parties appear to me not merely expedient but absolutely necessary, if the House of Commons is to retain its present position in the State. A House of Commons without clearly defined parties might exist, but it could not be safely entrusted with the virtual government of the country.

It is easy to maintain the discipline of party organisations when they represent a clear division of principles and measures. It is much more difficult in periods of political languor, when there is no pressing question at issue, when the old grounds of controversy have been exhausted and new ones have not yet arisen, and when the keenest observers of political conflicts can detect but little real difference of principle or even of tendency.

At such times the true function of the party in opposition is to restrain the Government from isolated mistakes, to expose such mistakes when they are committed; and if through blunders or personal unpopularity the Government has fallen into discredit, to be prepared to take its place and to carry on the administration on the same general lines, but with greater dexterity of management. This is the contingency for which under such circumstances an Opposition should wait. The great majority of the mistakes of governments are at all times unconnected with party principles, and a body whose function is to criticise and prevent them is discharging a duty of the first importance. No doctrine in modern politics is more mischievous than that an Opposition is bound to justify its separate existence by showing that it differs on broad questions of principle and policy from the party in power. Among the greatest dangers of modern constitutional governments is the temptation presented to Oppositions to go about looking for a cry, seeking for party purposes to force on changes for which there is no real and spontaneous demand.

Although public opinion was quite ripe for some measures of reform, the lines of political division in the first years of George III. were strangely confused, and party had in a great degree degenerated into faction. There was little of the natural union of politicians through community of political principles and aims; but there were several distinct groups united through purely personal motives—through attachment to a particular nobleman, or a desire to secure for particular families a monopoly of power. As long as a very large proportion both of the county and borough votes were at the command of a few great noblemen, who were closely connected by relationship or friendship, it was inevitable that this form of influence should prevail in Parliament; and the evil lay not in the existence but

in the great multiplication of these groups, and in the purely personal motives that usually actuated them. The first great object should have been to draw a distinct line of policy according to which these scattered fragments might be combined. The temptation of politicians in popular governments is to outrun, but in oligarchical governments to lag behind, genuine public opinion; and there were questions of the gravest and most pressing kind which had long been calling for the attention of the legislators. Such were the inadequacy of the popular element and the gross and notorious corruption in Parliament, and the appearance within its walls of an organised Court party distinct from the party of administration. By pressing these questions, all statesmen would soon be obliged to take a side, and it was probable that the excessive subdivision of parties would speedily disappear.

This was very much the policy which was advocated by Burke as the spokesman of the Rockingham Whigs. He maintained that the habit of systematic co-operation between politicians was to be encouraged rather than discouraged; that the personal attachments and connections which cemented it were very useful in government, but that it was necessary, in the face of the mass of discontent which was smouldering in the nation, and of the growing corruption and inefficiency of Parliament, that each party should have a distinct line of policy. As time went on, these lines, as we shall see, became clearer and clearer; and the writings of Burke probably contributed more than any other single influence to define them. Pitt, on the other hand, while loudly proclaiming the necessity of strengthening the popular element in Parliament, imagined it to be both possible and useful to break up absolutely the small bodies which had grown up around the great families. He regarded with some reason the selfishness, the incapacity, the

intrigues, and the jealousies of the great nobles as the main cause of the weakness, anarchy, and corruption of recent English politics. He imagined that by selecting subordinate ministers from men of the most various factions he might, with the assistance of the King, dissolve these factions, subdue all serious opposition, and by the ascendency of his own genius, character, and popularity, give a firm and consistent movement to the administration.[1]

In accordance with these principles, the new ministry was formed of politicians drawn from the most opposite quarters and encumbered by the most opposite antecedents. Some of them were men of great ability and position; but they were men who in the divisions that had grown out of the Wilkes case, and out of the Stamp Act, had recently pursued the most divergent courses, and who in many instances had shown a strange vacillation of character and opinion. The King's friends mustered strongly in the lower offices, and they also held several posts of commanding importance. Lord Northington exchanged the Chancellorship for the post of President of the Council, and as the new office was somewhat less lucrative than the former one he obtained in addition the grant of a pension of 4,000*l.* a year, from the time he quitted office, as well as a reversion of Clerk of the Hanaper for two lives. Lord Barrington was still Secretary of War. Charles Townshend, whose support of the policy of taxing America was no secret, was Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord North, who

---

[1] The judgment of Walpole when the ministry was first formed is a remarkable instance of his political sagacity. 'The plan will probably be to pick and cull from all quarters, and break all parties as much as possible. From this moment I date the wane of Mr. Pitt's glory; he will want the thorough-bass of drums and trumpets, and is not made for peace.'—To Montagu, July 10, 1766.

had for some time been rising to notice as one of the ablest defenders of the Court policy about Wilkes and about America, was made Joint Paymaster of the Forces. His colleague, George Cooke, is said never to have even spoken to him till they were united in the same office. Side by side with them sat the new Chancellor, Lord Camden, who in the Wilkes case and in the case of America had identified himself with the most popular opinions. Conway, who in the last ministry had introduced and carried the repeal of the Stamp Act, was induced to abandon the Rockingham party and retain his old office of Secretary of State. Shelburne and Barré, who were now closely attached to Pitt, and who had distinguished themselves by their uncompromising opposition to American taxation, were both in the ministry, the first as Secretary of State, the second as a Vice-Treasurer of Ireland. Lord Granby was made Commander-in-Chief. The head of the Treasury would naturally have fallen to Pitt, but he emphatically refused it. He felt, as the result showed with too good reason, that his health made him wholly unfit for a post of great official duty, and, though the real head of the Government, he held only the almost sinecure office of Privy Seal. The Duke of Grafton, who had so recently revolted against Rockingham, was made First Lord of the Treasury. When only twenty-four, Grafton had been Groom of the Stole to George III. when he was the Prince of Wales, and his courtly manners, as well as a certain ductility of principles, had made him peculiarly acceptable to the King, but had not secured him from being deprived of the lord-lieutenancy of his county for his opposition to the peace. His great position, his very considerable powers of speech, and the unbounded admiration he professed for Pitt, explained his promotion; but he hated business, he was passionately devoted to field sports, and he had neither the

industry nor the firmness that were required for the head of a Government.

In this strangely incoherent ministry Temple had no place. His influence over his brother-in-law had during the last few months been most disastrously displayed; but the relations between them had been rapidly becoming strained. They differed about the Stamp Act; for Temple on this question agreed with his brother George Grenville. They differed about Wilkes; for Pitt, though condemning the legal proceedings of which he was the object, never concealed his contempt for that demagogue. They differed in party politics; for Temple was now steadily gravitating towards Grenville. At the same time, the popularity which he had lately enjoyed on account of his connection with Wilkes had raised his pretensions to the highest point. Pitt offered to place him at the head of the Treasury; but refused to grant him an equal share in nominating to the other posts. Temple was bitterly offended, broke off the conference in anger, and began to inspire virulent libels against his brother-in-law. In an anonymous pamphlet on the other side there occurred a phrase which was much noticed for its happiness of expression, and in which critics imagined that they could trace the hand of Pitt: 'Had Lord Temple not fastened himself upon Mr. Pitt's train, he might have crept out of life with as little notice as he crept in, and gone off with no other degree of credit than that of adding a single unit to the bills of mortality.' The secession of Temple contributed, indeed, to make the Government more popular with the King; it relieved Pitt from one of his worst advisers, but the whole Grenville connection were now united in opposition.

Much more fatal to the ministry was the news that Pitt was resolved to abandon the House of Commons, and, as Earl of Chatham, to take his seat among the

Lords. His promotion to the peerage was the necessary consequence of his acceptance of the post of Privy Seal, as that office was always held by a peer,[1] and it was probably due to a well-founded conviction that his health was so broken and his nervous system so shattered that it was simply impossible for him to conduct public business in the House of Commons. But he soon found, as Pulteney had found before, how ruinous such an honour may be to a popular statesman. The main secret of his unrivalled influence over the people was the conviction that he owed his power to their favour; that in the midst of the corruption of an essentially aristocratic Government he was the great representative of the democracy of England. His pension had for a time obscured his popularity; but it soon returned, and his unrivalled influence in the House of Commons was unshaken. But now, at last, the spell was broken. The revulsion of feeling was immediate and irrevocable. The City, where he had lately been idolised, refused to present an address. The lamps which had already been placed around the Monument, for an illumination in honour of his return to office, were at once removed. Shorn of the popularity which had been the chief element of his power, he passed into an assembly which was eminently uncongenial to his eloquence, while in the House of Commons Charles Townshend alone was able to encounter Grenville and Burke; and Townshend, in spite of his extraordinary abilities, had all the vanity of a woman and all the levity of a child. 'The City,' wrote Sir Robert Wilmot, 'have brought in their verdict of *felo de se* against William, Earl of Chatham.'[2] 'I wish,' wrote Chesterfield to his son, 'I could send you all the pamphlets and half-sheets that swarm here

---

[1] Thackeray's *Life of Chatham*, ii. 84.

[2] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 26.

upon the occasion; but that is impossible, for every week would make a ship's cargo. It is certain that Mr. Pitt has by his dignity of Earl lost the greater part of his popularity, especially in the City; and I believe the Opposition will be very strong, and perhaps prevail next session in the House of Commons, there being now nobody there who has the authority and ascendency over them that Pitt had.'[1]

At every step the difficulties of Chatham increased. He had at all times remarkably few personal adherents. In one of his conversations in 1762 he represented himself as so isolated in Parliament that he had no one except the Clerk to speak to; and just before his second ministry he described himself, with the gross bad taste into which he occasionally fell, as 'standing like our first parents, naked, but not ashamed.' The politicians whose opinions in general agreed the best with his own were those who were attached to Rockingham, and he wished, while breaking up the Rockingham organisation, to retain the services of the chief members of the party. Rockingham appears to have acted with great moderation. He advised those of his followers who were not removed by Chatham to remain in office, and many great noblemen of the connection accordingly remained in posts which were chiefly honorary. But after the conduct of Chatham during the late ministry cordial co-operation was impossible. Chatham visited Rockingham; but the latter positively refused to see him.[2] Dowdeswell, whose financial capacity was very considerable, and who was much respected in the House of Commons, was strongly pressed to join the Government, either as President of the Board of Trade or as Joint Paymaster, but he absolutely refused.[3] Edmund

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 21.

[2] *Grenville Papers*, iii. 283.

[3] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 22, 23.

Burke, whose splendid genius was rising rapidly above the horizon, might have had a seat at the Board of Trade; but he remained faithful to his leader and to his party.[1]

It was unfortunate, too, that the ministry was formed at a period of great and general distress. The harvest had been unusually bad; the price of corn rose with ominous rapidity. In every part of England bread riots took place. Flour mills were destroyed; corn, bread, and other necessaries were in many places seized by the populace and sold at low prices, and several lives were lost in the western counties in collisions between the soldiers and the mob. The gaols were filled with prisoners, and discontent was wide and bitter. The Government, according to the unwise custom of the time, issued a proclamation in September 1766 for putting in force an old statute against forestallers, regraters, and engrossers of corn; and this measure proving ineffectual, they thought it necessary to prohibit the export of corn. By an Act of Charles II. corn might be legally exported from England as long as the home price was under 53*s.* 4*d.* a quarter, and this limit had not yet been attained; but as the price was rapidly rising, and as famine was approaching, the ministers thought it necessary to anticipate the legal period of prohibition. The proper machinery for effecting this was, of course, an Act of Parliament. But Parliament was not sitting, and there were serious objections to summoning it as quickly as might be required. Under these circumstances, an Order of Council was issued laying an embargo on corn. The act was obviously beyond the law; but under ordinary circumstances it would probably have excited little comment, for it was called forth by a grave, pressing, and acknowledged

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 111. Prior's *Life of Burke*, i. 163.

necessity, and Parliament was perfectly ready to ratify what was done. Chatham, in a very reasonable and moderate speech, and in language which was perfectly constitutional, defended it as 'an act of power justifiable before Parliament on the ground of necessity;' but Northington contended that under such circumstances the proclamation was legally as well as morally justifiable, and Camden added that, at worst, the measure was 'but a forty days' tyranny.' Mansfield at once saw his advantage, and, assuming the position of the champion of law against prerogative, he answered with crushing force.

In the Commons the debates were even more damaging to the ministry. Beckford, who was one of the most intimate friends of Chatham, and who was sometimes put forward to speak in his name, declared that 'if the public was in danger, the King has a dispensing power, with the advice of the Council, whenever the *salus populi* requires it.' It is not probable that he meant anything very different from what would now be generally acknowledged, that extreme cases sometimes arise in which it is the duty, and therefore the right, of ministers, at their own peril, and subject to the subsequent judgment of Parliament, to set aside the law; but his expressions were plainly inaccurate, and they might be easily construed into a revival of the dispensing doctrine of the Stuarts. Grenville moved that the words should be taken down, and Beckford was ultimately obliged to retract them. A Bill was brought in by Conway to indemnify those who acted under the proclamation; but Grenville maintained that the act of indemnity must include the ministers who advised as well as the officials who acted under the proclamation. The ministers accepted this correction, and Chatham especially recommended that the Act should be 'made as strong as possible;' but the whole transaction raised

a great deal of angry and exaggerated outcry against his administration.[1]

It was evidently necessary to strengthen it, but no minister was ever less fitted than Chatham to conciliate opponents or to perform the delicate functions of party management. His colleagues complained that he consulted no one in his nominations, that he took the most important steps without their knowledge, that they were often wholly ignorant of the policy he designed. The letters of his opponents were full of complaints of 'the *hauteur* with which Lord Chatham treats all mankind;' of 'the disgust which extended very wide among the principal families of the kingdom;' of 'the insolent behaviour of the minister to the first nobility of the kingdom.' Continually harassed by the conflicting pretensions of titled beggars, whose sole merit lay in their properties and their names, he met them with a pride which was beyond the pride of birth or wealth, and he made personal enemies at every step. In the House of Commons the Government was especially weak. When Charles Townshend brought forward his first budget, Grenville and Dowdeswell combined to reduce the land-tax from 4*s.* to 3*s.* in the pound, and by the assistance of the county members they carried their motion by a majority of 18. This is said to have been the first instance since the Revolution of a minister being defeated on a money Bill, and it is a significant illustration of the declining popularity of Chatham, that on this occasion 'most of those who had county or popular elections' were united against him.'[2]

---

[1] 7 George III. cap. vii. See an account of the whole transaction in a letter from Grenville himself, *Grenville Papers*, iii. 341–343, and in a letter from Flood to Charlemont (*Flood's Letters*, ix.). See, too, *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 125–128.

[2] *Parl. Hist.* xvi. 362–364. *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 224.

The attempt to withdraw single politicians from their several connections signally failed. Overtures were made to the Bedford faction, but the Duke, whom Chatham had recently endeavoured to drive out of all active politics, would only join if he had the disposal of so many places that he would have become virtually the director of the Government, and the negotiation, to the great delight of the King, accordingly failed. In the course of it, Chatham wished to appoint a partisan of the Duke of Bedford Treasurer of the Council, and Lord Mount Edgcumbe, who held that post, was asked to exchange it for the post of Lord of the Bedchamber. He refused, and was summarily dismissed, and the Government thus lost the support of the patron of four boroughs not long before a general election, and once more mortally affronted the whole Rockingham connection. In November and December 1766, the administration seemed in a state of complete dissolution. The Duke of Portland, the Earls of Besborough and Scarborough, Lord Monson, Sir C. Saunders, Sir W. Meredith, and Admiral Keppel, resigned, and Conway was only prevented with extreme difficulty from following their example. A few scattered politicians—the most remarkable being Sir E. Hawke—were induced to fill the void, but a new negotiation with the Duke of Bedford ended only in a violent altercation. The ministry had neither the strength which grows out of popularity nor the strength which grows out of interest. 'There is still a little twilight of popularity,' wrote Burke, 'remaining round the great peer, but it fades away every moment.'[1] 'One thing,' wrote Charlemont to Flood, 'appears very extraordinary, if not indecent —no member of the Opposition speaks without directly abusing Lord Chatham, and no friend ever rises to take

[1] *Burke's Correspondence*, i. 106.

his part. . . . . Never was known such disunion, such a want of concert as visibly appears on both sides. How it will end Heaven only knows.'[1] 'Such a state of affairs,' wrote Chesterfield, after the resignation of the Rockingham section of the ministry, 'was never before seen in this or any other country. When this ministry shall be settled, it will be the sixth in six years' time.'[2]

Alarming intelligence had been received of renewed war preparations in France, and Chatham resolved to guard against the danger that was still apprehended from the Family Compact, by a great northern alliance of England, Prussia, and Russia. Frederick, however, resented bitterly the desertion of England in the last war, and he utterly refused the alliance. Of Chatham personally he spoke with respect and admiration, but professed himself entirely sceptical about the continuance of his power and popularity since he had accepted a peerage. Frederick had now entered into a close and separate connection with Russia, and was wholly alienated from England, while Russia would only accept the alliance if it were made to extend to a Turkish war.[3] 'One thing I feel,' wrote that experienced diplomatist, Sir Andrew Mitchell, 'that the late frequent changes in England have created a degree of diffidence in foreign Powers which renders all negotiation with them difficult and disagreeable.'[4]

The Government could thus point to no great triumph of policy to counterbalance its internal weakness. A project was indeed entertained of withdrawing the great

---

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 210. 'There are four parties,' Lord Northington said about this time, 'Butes, Bedfords, Rockinghams, Chathams, and we (the last) are the weakest of the four.' —Albemarle's *Life of Rockingham*, ii. 34.

[2] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 136.

[3] Ibid. iii. 6–9, 84–86.

[4] Ibid. iii. 80.

dominions which had been conquered in Hindostan from the control of a mere mercantile company, placing them under the direct dominion of the Crown, and diverting to the public treasury the territorial as distinguished from the mercantile revenues. Clive had at one time suggested this measure, though he afterwards appears to have opposed it.[1] Chatham attached very great importance to it, and Shelburne entered cordially into his views, but a parliamentary inquiry into the affairs of the Company was the only step of importance that was taken before Chatham was hopelessly incapacitated by illness. It was moved in the Commons in November 1766, and it was characteristic of Chatham that he entrusted the motion, not to any of the responsible ministers of the Crown, but to Beckford, one of the vainest and most hot-headed of the City politicians. The inquiry was ordered by a large majority, in spite of the opposition of the Grenvilles and the Rockinghams; but Charles Townshend, while supporting it, took occasion to say, in direct opposition to the leading principle of Chatham, that 'he believed the Company had a right to territorial revenue.'[2] Townshend was already intriguing against his chief, speaking openly against him in private circles, and probably aspiring to the position of Prime Minister, and he soon after more openly raised the standard of revolt by declaring his full sympathy with the policy of taxing America.

The Government was steadily becoming a Tory Government. Separated from the Grenville connection, from the Bedford connection, and from the Rockingham connection, the King's friends were necessarily its chief support. The King was gratified by the restoration of Mr. Stuart Mackenzie, the brother of Bute, to the post

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 62. Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne*, ii. 16–18.

[2] Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne*, ii. 22.

from which Grenville had so imperiously thrust him, subject, however, to the condition that he was to exercise no political power.[1] Lord Northumberland, the brother-in-law of Bute, was thrown into paroxysms of fury because another nobleman had been preferred to him as Master of the Horse, but he was pacified by a dukedom;[2] and, to the astonishment and indignation of many of the old followers of Chatham, most of the vacant places were filled up by Tories. The power of the Government rested upon the extreme division of its opponents, and upon the firm union which was again established between the ministry and the Court. Each of these possessed so great an influence over elections and over members of Parliament that they could seldom fail when united to command a majority. The defeat of the Government on the land-tax was chiefly due to a surprise and to the selfish interests of the county members, but in most cases the Government, even when much divided, discredited, and out-debated, could count upon large majorities in the House of Commons. In critical divisions abstentions were very numerous, and one or other section of the Opposition usually left the House.[3]

The clouds darkened more and more. The health of Chatham, which was now of such capital importance, rapidly gave way. In the very first month of his administration he had been prostrated with fever,[4] and it soon became evident that he could exercise no steady direction over affairs. From October 1766 till the following March he was at Bath, but was able to keep up

---

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 58.

[2] *Grenville Papers*, iii. 384, 385.

[3] The following were the numbers in several of the chief party divisions in 1766:—129 to 76, 166 to 48, 140 to 56, 131 to 67, 106 to 35, 180 to 147.—Walpole's *George III.* vol. ii.

[4] *Grenville Papers*, iii. 279.

some correspondence with his colleagues, but immediately on his return his disease appeared to settle mainly on his nerves. For some time it had been evident to close observers that his mind was gravely disordered. In public this was shown by the extraordinary and ungovernable arrogance with which he treated almost every leading politician with whom he came in contact; by the strange outbursts of wild rhodomontade that defaced some of his noblest speeches; by the unbridled fury with which he often resented the slightest opposition. In private the symptoms were still more unequivocal. The legacy of Sir W. Pynsent had made him a rich man, but it was wholly insufficient for the extravagant expenses into which he now plunged. He bought up all the residences around Hayes and around his London house in order to free himself from neighbours. He ordered great plantations at Hayes, and pushed on the works with such feverish haste that it was necessary to continue them by torchlight throughout the night. He could not bear to have his children under the same roof, and could not tolerate the slightest noise. He sold Hayes and removed to Pynsent, where he insisted on covering a barren hill with cedars and cypresses, which were brought at enormous expense from London. A constant succession of chickens were boiling or roasting in his kitchen at every hour of the day, as his appetite was altogether uncertain, and when he desired to gratify it his temper could not brook the smallest delay. He soon grew tired of Pynsent, began to pine after Hayes, and at last, with great difficulty, Lady Chatham succeeded in repurchasing it for him. About nine months after he came to power his health wholly gave way. A gloomy and mysterious malady affecting his nerves and his mind, rendered him incapable of any mental exertion, of any political intercourse, of enduring even the faintest noise, of transacting the most ordinary business,

and in this state he continued with little intermission from March 1767 for more than two years.[1]

The Government fell at once into complete anarchy. The spell of the name of Chatham was still so great that he was kept at the head of affairs, but he was unable to take the smallest part in counsel or debate. Sometimes in the height of his malady he was seen taking exercise out of doors,[2] but he could bear no discussion, he could make no mental effort. The King vainly asked an interview of but a quarter of an hour. He wrote letter after letter full of the kindest consideration, imploring him to see Grafton, if it were but for five minutes. He represented to him that the Government majority in the Lords was one day only six, and another only three; that Shelburne was plotting against his colleagues; that Townshend was in open enmity with Grafton; that Conway had already announced his intention of resigning; that the Grenvilles, the Rockinghams, and the Bedfords were united in their efforts to storm the closet, while they confessed that they were far too divided to form an administration. The answers received by the hand of Lady Chatham were always in substance the same.

---

[1] See Walpole's *Memoirs of George III.* iii. 41–44. *Chatham Correspondence.* Whately wrote (July 30, 1767), 'Lord Chatham's state of health (I was told authentically yesterday) is certainly the lowest dejection and debility that mind or body can be in. He sits all the day leaning on his hands, which he supports on the table; does not permit any person to remain in the room; knocks when he wants anything, and, having made his wants known, gives a signal without speaking, to the person who answered his call to return.'—Phillimore's *Life of Lyttelton*, p. 729.

[2] 'Here [at Bath] Lord Chatham is, and goes out every day on horseback when the weather lets him, and looks rather thin and pallid; but otherwise very well in appearance; he sees no one.'—Mr. Augustus Hervey to Mr. Grenville, Nov. 3, 1767. *Grenville Papers*, iv. 180. On May 5, 1767, Chesterfield wrote, 'Lord Chatham is still ill, and only goes abroad for an hour a day to take the air in his coach.' —*Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 253.

'Such was the state of Lord Chatham's health that his Majesty must not expect from him any further advice or assistance.' 'He is overwhelmed with affliction still to find that the continuance in extreme weakness of nerves renders it impossible for him to flatter himself with being able soon to present himself before his Majesty. He is as yet utterly incapable of the smallest effort.' He had no wish to continue in a post the duties of which he was unable to discharge, and he again and again implored the King to accept his resignation; but, broken and in some respects discredited as he was, his name was still the one support of the Government. The King implored him to remain; Grafton, Camden, and Shelburne wrote urgently to the same effect. On one occasion Grafton obtained an interview with him, but he found him completely prostrated with nervous weakness and depression, and was able to extract from him little more than an entreaty to remain at his post, and the general advice to strengthen the ministry by some coalition; if possible, by a junction with the Bedford party.[1]

That ministry was now indeed the strangest spectacle of confusion. As Charlemont said, it 'was divided into as many parties as there were men in it.' During the latter part of 1767 and some months of 1768 it continued in a condition of chronic fluctuation, perpetual negotiations and intrigues going on between the different fractions of the ministry and the different sections of the Opposition. Every leading Whig statesman took part in them, and in the course of them we for the last time find in public affairs the names of the old Duke of Newcastle and of Lord Holland. Without describing them in detail, it may be sufficient to relate the most important changes. In September 1767

[1] See the interesting passage from the Duke of Grafton's autobiography quoted in Walpole's *George III.* iii. 51, 52.

Charles Townshend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons, died, and Lord North became Chancellor of the Exchequer. A few months later the Bedford faction effected a junction with the Government. The Duke, indeed, declined office, but Gower, Sandwich, Weymouth, and Rigby were introduced into the ministry, while Northington and Conway retired.[1]

In January 1768 Lord Hillsborough, whose sympathies were with the Tory party, was appointed Secretary of State for the Colonies, and in October Shelburne, who was now one of the most trusted adherents of Chatham, was almost forced to resign. Shelburne had become obnoxious both to the King, the Bedford faction, and the Duke of Grafton. He utterly differed from the pacific policy of the Government, and he would have resisted by force the acquisition of Corsica by France. He now went with his follower Colonel Barré into opposition. Lord Camden, the Chancellor, was at variance with all the other members of the Cabinet, and remained for long periods absent from its meetings. The Duke of Grafton, the nominal Prime Minister, was outvoted on some of the most important

[1] In one of Lord Lyttelton's letters (Nov. 25, 1767) there is a very curious account of a conversation of Lord Mansfield with the writer on the condition and prospects of the ministry. Mansfield said that 'no opposition would signify anything if the ministers held together, that the King mediated between them and kept them from breaking; that he was the most efficient man among them; that he made each of them believe he was in love with them [*sic*] and fooled them all: that unless that madman, Lord Chatham, should come and throw a fireball in the midst of them he thought they would stand their ground, but what *that* might do he could not tell; that Lord Bute alone could make a ministry which could last; that if he was dead no other man could do it so well. . . . He then dwelt a good deal on the certainty of a fixed resolution in the King not to change his army but only the generals of that army.'—Phillimore's *Life of Lyttelton*, pp. 736, 738.

questions, and desired only to resign. In July 1767 he had told the King that he could not continue at the head of the Treasury under existing circumstances, that he had accepted the foremost place merely for the sake of acting under Chatham, and not with any intention of being First Minister himself, and that unless Chatham was able and willing to grasp the helm he was resolved to retire.[1] He was persuaded with difficulty to continue in office if Conway remained, and then again to continue when Conway resigned, but he was fully conscious that he was unfit for his post, and incapable of controlling the discordant elements of the Government. He gave full rein to his feelings of disgust and of indolence, and remained for long periods in the country, only going once a week to London to discharge his duties as First Minister of the Crown.[2]

On every important question it touched, the ministry which was formed by Chatham pursued a course opposed to the policy of its chief. Beyond all other English statesmen Chatham had been jealous of French power, conspicuous in denouncing the attempt to tax America, and fearless in the assertion of popular rights. His colleagues during the season of his prostration permitted France to obtain possession of Corsica, revived the disloyalty of America by imposing duties on certain goods imported into the colonies, and flung the country into a paroxysm of agitation by maintaining that the simple vote of the House of Commons was sufficient to disqualify Wilkes. They also justly aroused great indignation by a measure which was regarded as a flagrant violation of personal property for political purposes. Sir James Lowther, the son-in-law of Bute, a man of immense wealth and political influence in Cumberland and

---

[1] *Grenville Papers*, iv. 27, 31. 391, 392. *Grenville Papers*, iv.
[2] Walpole's *George III.* iii. 268.

Westmoreland, but whose violence, arrogance, despotism, and caprice rose almost to the point of madness,[1] was engaged in a fierce political contest in those counties with the Duke of Portland, the head of the most important family of the Opposition. The property of Portland had been granted by the Crown, and Sir James Lowther discovered that a certain district containing many freemen, which had been for two generations in the undisputed possession of the Portland family, was not distinctly specified in the grant. Availing himself of the legal maxim that no lapse of time can destroy the rights of the Crown or of the Church, Lowther disputed the title of the Duke to this portion of his property, and obtained from the Crown the lease of the lands for himself. The notorious object of this transaction was the transfer of a few votes from the Opposition to the Government, and it appeared peculiarly iniquitous, for the latter refused to give the Duke of Portland access to the collection of grants in the office of the Surveyor-General, which might have enabled him to defend his rights.[2] Even among the supporters of the ministry it produced grave discontent, and it led to the Nullum Tempus Bill, which, though thrown out by the influence of Lord North in 1768, was carried without opposition in the following year, and secured landowners from all dormant claims on the part of the Crown after an undisputed possession of sixty years.

The ministry of Chatham had been warmly supported by the King, for Chatham had thrown himself cordially into the King's great object, the destruction of the previous system of government by party or by connection. 'I know,' wrote the King on the day he signed the warrant creating his minister an earl, 'the

[1] Some very curious anecdotes of this singular personage will be found in Albemarle's *Life of Rockingham*, ii. 70–72.

[2] Walpole's *George III.* iii. 143–146.

Earl of Chatham will zealously give his aid towards destroying all party distinctions and restoring that subordination to government which can alone preserve that inestimable blessing, liberty, from degenerating into licentiousness;'[1] and in another letter he described 'the very end proposed at the formation of the present administration' as being 'to root out the present method of parties banding together.'[2] The patience and consideration with which the King acted towards Chatham during his illness forms one of the brightest pages of his reign, and for some time there was a cordial union between the Court and the Executive. The introduction of the Bedford faction into the Government was contrary to the wishes of the King, but he appears to have recognised the necessity. His objections to this faction were rather personal than political, and the condition of the Government was at this time extremely favourable to his designs. A feeble, uncertain, and wavering ministry, without any efficient head, and paralysed by the dissensions of its most important members, gave rare facilities for the exercise of his influence. Several of the ministers were personally attached to him. The discipline and unity of action of the King's friends gave them an overwhelming power amid the disintegration of parties. Bute, whose personal unpopularity and incapacity had greatly weakened the royal cause, was now wholly removed from politics,[3] and in the new

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 21.

[2] Ibid. iii. 137.

[3] In 1778 Bute authorised his son to write to the papers, 'that he declares upon his solemn word of honour that he has not had the honour of waiting upon his Majesty but at his levee or drawing-room; nor has he presumed to offer any advice or opinion concerning the disposition of offices or the conduct of measures either directly or indirectly, by himself or any other, from the time when the late Duke of Cumberland was consulted in the arrangement of a ministry in 1765 to the present hour.'—See the *Correspondence of George III. and Lord North*, i. p. xxi.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord North, the King had found a parliamentary leader who was prepared to accept office under the conditions he required, and who was in almost every respect pre-eminently fitted to represent his views.

The son of the Earl of Guilford, Lord North had entered Parliament in 1754, had accepted a lordship of the Treasury under Pitt in 1759, had been removed from office by Rockingham in 1765, and had again come into office with Pitt as Joint Paymaster of the Forces. He belonged, however, to none of the Whig parties, and he possessed in the highest degree that natural leaning towards authority which was most pleasing to the King. Since the beginning of the reign there had been no arbitrary or unpopular measure which he had not defended. He supported the Cyder Act of Bute and opposed its repeal. He moved the expulsion of Wilkes. He was one of the foremost advocates of general warrants in every stage of the controversy. He defended the Stamp Act. He bitterly resisted its repeal. He defeated for a time the attempt to secure the property of the subject from the dormant claims of the Crown. Most of the measures which he advocated in the long course of his ministry were proved by the event to be disastrous and foolish, but he possessed an admirable good sense in the management of details, and he had many of the qualities that lead to eminence both in the closet and in Parliament. His ungainly form, his harsh tones, his slow and laboured utterance, his undisguised indolence, furnished a ready theme for ridicule, but his private character was wholly unblemished. No statesman ever encountered the storms of political life with a temper which it was more difficult to ruffle or more impossible to embitter. His almost unfailing tact, his singularly quick and happy wit, and his great knowledge of business, and especially

of finance,[1] made him most formidable as a debater, while his sweet and amiable disposition gave him some personal popularity even in the most disastrous moments of his career. Partly through political principle and partly through weakness of character he continually subordinated his own judgment to that of the King, and carried out with greatly superior abilities a policy not very different from that of Bute. The growing power of North drew the King more closely to his ministers, and he cordially adopted their views on the two great questions on which English politics were now chiefly concentrated. These questions were the Middlesex election and the renewed taxation of America.

[1] See a very striking account of his budget speech in 1767, in a letter of Rigby.—*Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 408.

CHAPTER X.

When we last encountered Wilkes in this narrative he had retired to Paris after his duel with Martin, and had a few months later been outlawed on account of his refusal to appear to take his trial in England. He soon recovered his old health and spirits; but his political enthusiasm seems for a time to have died away in his admiration for 'the matchless charms' of an Italian courtesan named Corradini, with whom he was now violently enamoured. He projected a journey to Italy with her and with Churchill, and in the autumn of 1764 he met Churchill at Boulogne; but a great catastrophe interfered with their plan. Churchill was seized with a malignant fever, and died in a few days, at the early age of thirty-three, leaving a sadly stained and shameful memory, and a few volumes, which were once supposed to rival the poetry of Pope, but which have now almost wholly dropped out of the notice of the world. Wilkes soon after went on with his mistress to Italy. He spent several months between Bologna, Florence, Rome, and Naples; saw much of Winckelmann; was present at Naples at the miracle of St. Januarius, and kissed the phial on his knees; projected a history of England, a biography and annotated edition of the poems of Churchill, but soon found that extended literary undertakings were wholly unsuited to his tastes; and at length, having quarrelled with Corradini, he returned

alone to France.[1] He visited Voltaire at Ferney, and the old patriarch was much struck with his liveliness and wit. The Rockinghams had now come to power, and as they had been strongly opposed to the measures which had driven him from England, he expected much from their assistance. He paid a secret visit to London in 1766 in hopes of obtaining a pardon and a pension, and perhaps the embassy of Constantinople;[2] but he soon found that the ministers, though they raised among themselves a large private subscription for him, could not, or would not, do anything more.[3] On the change of Government he renewed his overtures, trusting to his former friendship with Grafton; but he was told that without Chatham nothing could be done. After the language of Chatham, a personal application would have been a humiliation too great for Wilkes to endure; and he returned, full of indignation, to the Continent, and published an angry account of the transaction. In March 1768, however, on the eve of the general election, he again appeared—this time without any concealment—in London, forwarded a petition for pardon to the King, but at the same time announced himself as a candidate for the representation of the City of London. The spectacle of a penniless adventurer of notoriously infamous character, and lying at this very time under a sentence of outlawry, and under a condemnation for blasphemy and libel, standing against a popular

[1] The details of his journey through Italy will be found in a curious manuscript fragment of autobiography in the British Museum.

[2] *Grenville Papers*, iii. 95. Prior's *Life of Burke*, i. 153.

[3] 'The ministers are embarrassed to the last degree how to act with regard to Wilkes. It seems they are afraid to press the King for his pardon, as that is a subject his Majesty will not easily hear the least mention of; and they are apprehensive if he has it not, that the mob of London will rise in his favour.'—The Bishop of Carlisle to Grenville (May 27, 1776), *Grenville Papers*, iii. 241.

alderman in the metropolis of England, was a very strange one; and although Wilkes was at the bottom of the poll, he obtained more than 1,200 votes, and in the opinion of Franklin, who was then living in England, he would probably have succeeded had he appeared earlier in the field. He at once stood for Middlesex. He had powerful supporters. Temple contributed the freehold qualification which was necessary; the Duke of Portland was on his side; Horne, the rector of Brentford, who was already known as a man of great energy, ability, and local influence, threw all his power into the scale. The election took place at Brentford on March 28, and its result was that Wilkes was at the head of the poll.

The triumph of Wilkes was wholly unexpected by the Government,[1] and they had great doubts about the course they should pursue. As a Member of Parliament he was already known, and he was as far as possible from being formidable; nothing, indeed, was more likely to terminate his popularity than a parliamentary career. 'I do not fear firebrands in this House,' Canning once said, with great good sense; 'as soon as they touch its floor they hiss and are extinguished;' and with the single exception of O'Connell, who possessed to a very high degree the talents both of a debater and of a party leader, the truth of this saying has been always verified in England. In the weak, divided, and headless ministry of Grafton there were not wanting voices to urge that in the face of the fierce storm of popular excitement that was rising, and after the many mistakes that had been made in the earlier encounters between Wilkes and the Government, the wisest course was to grant the new member a free pardon, and to allow him to take his seat

[1] See the letters of Lord Camden, *Campbell's Chancellors*, vi. 390-392.

in the House and sink gradually to his natural level. But the King took a warm and personal interest in the matter, and his firm will dictated the policy of his Government. He complained bitterly that the Duke of Grafton had proposed to him to pardon Wilkes, and he wrote to Lord North a peremptory injunction that the whole power of the Government must be exerted to expel the demagogue from Parliament.[1]

In the meantime two important events had occurred. In order to avoid arrest in the course of the election, Wilkes had written to the solicitor of the Treasury pledging himself to surrender on his outlawry at the Court of King's Bench on the first day of the succeeding term. He accordingly appeared before Lord Mansfield on April 20, and again, after the rectification of some legal informalities, on the 27th. The question of the legality of the outlawry was argued at great length, and Lord Mansfield postponed the decision to the following term, but in the meantime refused to admit Wilkes to bail. He accordingly remained in prison till June 8, when Mansfield, on a purely technical point of law, pronounced the outlawry to be illegal. Wilkes was thus restored to his full rights as a British subject; but the condemnation which had been pronounced against him during his absence, for seditious libel and for blasphemy, still remained. On June 18 he appeared to receive his sentence. There were the strongest reasons both of justice and policy why the Court should deal leniently with him, for he had already suffered much, and he had suffered in defiance of the law. It had been decided that the general warrant by which he had been originally arrested was illegal; that the search warrant by which his papers were seized was illegal; that the outlawry

[1] *Correspondence of George III. with Lord North*, i. 2. Walpole's *George III.* iii. 200.

pronounced against him was illegal. It was as certain as any proposition in history could be that the King's speech had, at least since the accession of the House of Brunswick, been uniformly discussed as the speech of the ministers; and regarding it in that light there was nothing exceptionally violent in the incriminated number of the 'North Briton.' However culpable might be the 'Essay on Woman,' it was an outrage upon common-sense to condemn Wilkes for 'publishing' a pamphlet of which he had only struck off twelve or thirteen copies, with the most profound secrecy, for distribution among his intimate friends; and no human being could believe that the prosecution of the essay had been really undertaken in the interests of public morals. Wilkes, however, was sentenced to be imprisoned for twenty-two months, to be fined 1,000*l.*, and to obtain security for good behaviour for seven years after his imprisonment had terminated. One usual element in sentences for libels was omitted. The judges knew too well the feelings of the populace to confer upon Wilkes the popular triumph which would have inevitably ensued had he been sentenced to stand in the pillory.

While these events were taking place, the riotous spirit which had for some years been growing stronger and stronger in England increased almost to the point of revolution. At the opening of the Middlesex election, the mob at break of day took possession of every avenue and turnpike leading to the place of voting, and would suffer no one to pass who did not wear a blue cockade with the name of Wilkes and No. 45; and during the two days of the election the whole town was almost at their mercy. The windows of the Mansion House were demolished. The houses of Lord Bute, Lord Egmont, the Duke of Northumberland, and the Duchess of Hamilton were attacked. The City Marshal and many of the principal opponents of Wilkes were as-

saulted as they drove through Hyde Park. The coach-glasses of all who refused to huzza for 'Wilkes and Liberty' were broken, and even ladies were taken out of their chairs and compelled to join in the popular cry. The Austrian Ambassador, one of the most stately and ceremonious of men, was dragged from his coach and '45' chalked on the soles of his shoes. The same popular number was inscribed on every carriage that drove through the streets, and on every door along the roads far beyond the precincts of the City. Franklin noticed that there was hardly a house within fifteen miles of London unmarked, and the inscription might be seen from time to time the whole way from London to Winchester.

'For two nights,' wrote the same accurate observer, 'London was illuminated at the command of the mob. . . . The second night exceeded anything of the kind ever seen here on the greatest occasions of rejoicing, as even the small cross streets, lanes, courts, and other out-of-the-way places, were all in a blaze with lights, and the principal streets all night long, as the mobs went round again after two o'clock and obliged people who had extinguished their candles to light them again. Those who refused had all their windows destroyed.'[1] When Wilkes appeared at the King's Bench to receive judgment as an outlaw, the whole neighbourhood of the Court was thronged by his partisans; and when the Court, refusing to accept bail, committed him to prison, he was rescued on Westminster Bridge; the horses were taken off the carriage in which he was conveyed; he was dragged in triumph by the crowd through the Strand and through Fleet Street, and it was with much difficulty that he at last succeeded in escaping from his admirers and surrendering to the authorities.[2] The

[1] *Franklin's Works* (Spark's ed.), vii. 399, 400.
[2] *Annual Register*, 1768, p. 100.

sentence that was passed on him exasperated the people to the highest degree, but they assumed that when Parliament met he would be released and allowed to take his seat. It assembled at length on May 10 in the midst of a fierce tumult, great crowds shouting 'Wilkes and Liberty!' about the House. But the chief excitement was in St. George's Fields, around the King's Bench prison, where Wilkes was confined. The Government anticipated a dangerous riot, and either because they feared lest the contagion should gain the English troops, or in a spirit of mere bravado, they selected a detachment from a Scotch regiment to keep the peace, and Lord Weymouth, the Secretary of State, wrote to the magistrate of the district urging him not to scruple to employ the soldiers in case of riot. The mob, finding that their hero was not released, began to threaten the prison, and to assail the soldiers with stones and brickbats, and in the course of a confused scuffle which ensued, some soldiers, pursuing into a private house a man who had assaulted them, encountered and killed a young man of very respectable position, named Allen, who is said to have been entirely unconnected with the riot. Soon after, the Riot Act was read. The troops fired; five or six persons were killed and fifteen wounded, and among the latter there were two women, one of whom died soon after. The coroner's inquest held upon Allen found a Scotch soldier, named Donald Maclean, guilty of his murder, and another soldier, as well as the commanding officer, guilty of aiding and abetting it. The Grand Jury, a few months later, threw out the bills against the two latter; but the former was put on his trial and acquitted. It was with difficulty that the mob were restrained from tearing him to pieces; and the indignation became still greater when the colonel of the regiment publicly presented him, after his acquittal, with thirty guineas on the part of the Govern-

ment; and when Lord Barrington, the Secretary of War, issued a general order conveying special thanks to the soldiers for their behaviour, and promising that 'if any disagreeable circumstances should happen in the execution of their duty,' they should have 'every protection that the law can authorise and their officers can give.' The only sister of Allen survived but a few months the shock she had received in her brother's death, and they were laid together in the churchyard at Newington, in Surrey. The inscription on their tombstone described William Allen as 'an Englishman of unspotted life and amiable disposition, who was inhumanly murdered by Scottish detachments from the army,' and two significant texts adjured the earth to refuse to cover his blood, and the Almighty 'to take away the wicked from before the King.'[1]

The exceeding weakness of the civil power was very evident, and there were great fears that all the bulwarks of order would yield to the strain. The neglect of the ministers to arrest Wilkes as an outlaw when he first appeared in England, and the complete impunity of those who in broad daylight had rescued him from the officers of justice, and conducted him in triumph through London and Westminster, emboldened the mob as much as the tragedy of St. George's Fields exasperated them. The City constables were so few that in the course of the election London was almost unprotected, nearly the whole available force being collected at Brentford. It was doubtful whether even the soldiers could be fully trusted. Some regimental drummers were said to have beaten their drums for Wilkes. A soldier was heard exclaiming in the very Court of King's Bench that he at least would never fire upon his fellow-countrymen; and it was rumoured that if Wilkes were suffered to take his seat in Parliament, his first measure

[1] *Annual Register*, 1769, p. 116.

would be to move that, on account of the increased price of provisions, the pay of the soldiers should be raised. Lord Mansfield may have listened too much to his constitutional timidity when he said that unless some vigorous measures were promptly taken, there would be a rebellion in ten days; and Franklin no doubt exaggerated when he said that if Wilkes had possessed a good character and the King a bad one, Wilkes would have driven George III. from the throne; but it is at least certain that the state of England was very alarming.

From the beginning of the reign the growing violence of the mobs and the growing weakness of the law had been ominously displayed. Thus in 1763, when an attempt was made to abolish the system of admitting to the theatres at half-price after the third act, the great theatres of Drury Lane and Covent Garden were completely wrecked; every seat and ornament within them was destroyed; the rioters even tried to cut down the pillars on which the gallery of Covent Garden Theatre rested, and they did all this with complete impunity.[1] In two successive years we find a man who was exposed on the pillory killed by the ill-treatment of the mob.[2] An attempt to rescue a criminal who, in 1763, was condemned for rape, was so formidable that, in spite of the intervention of the military, it was not till near eight in the evening that the authorities could carry out the sentence;[3] and it was rarely thought safe to execute a criminal at Tyburn without the protection of a military force.[4] The number

[1] *Annual Register*, 1763, pp. 52-58. It is remarkable that the Drury Lane riots were instigated and in part defended by anonymous writings of Philip Francis—his first known compositions in print.—Parkes and Merivale's *Life of Francis*, i. 68, 69.

[2] *Annual Register*, 1762, p. 75; 1763, p. 67; for another instance of a culprit being killed by ill-usage in the pillory, see *Annual Register*, 1780, p. 207.

[3] *Grenville Papers*, ii. 193. *Annual Register*, 1763, p. 96.

[4] *Annual Register*, 1765, p. 58.

of disbanded soldiers and sailors without any means of subsistence after the peace, greatly added to the evil, and the watchmen were so utterly helpless that Parliament in despair offered a reward of 40*l.* for the apprehension of every robber. The result was a revival of a practice which had appeared in England in the last reign. A confederation of five men employed themselves partly in inducing impoverished wretches to commit robberies, in order to obtain the reward for their conviction, and partly in falsely accusing innocent persons. In a few months they in this manner obtained more than 960*l.*, and most of their victims were in the grave when the hideous crime was discovered.[1]

The Middlesex election took place at a time of great distress and commercial depression. I have already noticed the bad harvest of 1767, the disturbances it produced, and the embargo which was imposed on the export of corn. The following winter was extremely rigorous, and the distress among the workmen in London was so great that the King, at the petition of the City of London, agreed to shorten the Court mourning for the Duke of York.[2] Strikes were very numerous, and London was full of poor, idle, reckless men prepared for the most desperate enterprise. Six thousand weavers were the most active agents in the Wilkes riots. Four thousand sailors on board the merchant ships in the Thames mutinied for higher wages, and stopped by force all outward-bound ships which were preparing to sail.[3] The watermen of the Thames, the journeymen

[1] This case is briefly noticed in the *Annual Register* of 1762, p. 75: for a further account see a remarkable essay on capital punishments in England in the *Anthologia Hibernica*, iv. 172. It is a curious illustration of the absurdity of British law that it was found that none of these criminals could be executed, as their offence only amounted to perjury. One of them was killed on the pillory by the mob.

[2] Holt's *George III.* i. 149, 156.

[3] *Annual Register*, 1768, p. 105.

hatters, the journeymen tailors, the glass-grinders, were soon on strike, and during two or three years London witnessed scenes of riot that could hardly have been surpassed in Connaught or the Highlands. At Wapping and Stepney the coalheavers, who were chiefly Irish, were for more than a year at war with the masters of the coal ships. They boarded the ships and compelled the sailors to cease from work. They kept guard at every landing-place to prevent them from receiving supplies of provisions; they obliged them to keep watches as if they were in an enemy's country, and fought bloody battles with the sailors in the streets. A man named Green, who was agent of one of the London aldermen, was especially obnoxious to them, and one evening at eight o'clock his house was besieged by a party provided with fire-arms. Green having barricaded his door, defended himself, with the assistance of a sailor and of a maid-servant, for no less than nine hours. Eighteen of the assailants were shot; two hundred bullets were lodged in one of the rooms of the house. At last, when his ammunition was expended, Green succeeded in escaping, but it was not until five in the morning that the Guards appeared upon the scene. A few days later the sister of Green was attacked in her house, dragged into the street, and murdered.[1] Riots not less serious and still more persistent were caused by the Spitalfields weavers, who were accustomed during 1767 and the three following years to range through the streets disguised and armed, breaking into the shops of weavers who refused to strike, destroying their looms, and cutting their work in pieces. Many were killed or wounded in conflicts with the soldiers. A law was passed making the offence capital;

[1] Walpole's *Memoirs of George III.* iii. 219–221. *Annual Register*, 1768, pp. 99, 114, 119, 129.

but soon after, more than a hundred and fifty looms were destroyed in two nights. Two 'cutters' were hanged under the new law, but a man named Clarke, who had been a chief witness against them, afterwards fell into the hands of a mob of more than two thousand persons, and in the full daylight, in one of the fields near Bethnal Green, he was deliberately stoned to death. The tragedy lasted for two hours, during which the wretched man vainly implored his murderers to shoot him and put him out of his agonies.[1]

These were but the more conspicuous instances of a spirit of insubordination and of violence which was shown in many forms and in many parts of the country, and was everywhere encouraged by the manifest impotence of authority. Ordinary crime had greatly increased. 'Housebreaking in London,' it was said, 'was never known to be so frequent; seldom a night passing but some house or other was entered and robbed.'[2] The tone of manners was very savage, and several crimes occurred about this time which, though they can only be regarded as instances of extreme individual depravity, and had no real connection with the general disturbance of society, heightened the impression, and sent a thrill of horror through the country. Thus, in 1767, a journeyman shoemaker named Williamson, who

---

[1] *Annual Register*, 1767, pp. 139, 140, 152, 158; 1768, pp. 139, 157; 1769, pp. 111, 124, 132, 136, 138; 1771, p. 96.

[2] Ibid. 1770, p. 78. Accurate statistics of the crime of housebreaking in London and Westminster may be found in *Parl. Hist.* xvi. 930. Between Michaelmas 1769 and March 14, 1770, no less than 104 houses were broken open and robbed. In 1772 a writer in the *Annual Register* (p. 80) emphatically said, 'Villany is now arrived at such a height in London that no man is safe in his own house.' And it was noticed that in 1759 and 1760, two years of war, the number of criminals condemned at the old Bailey was only 29; while during the two last years of peace, 1770 and 1771, the number had risen to 151. *Annual Register*, 1772, pp. 144, 145.

had married a half-witted girl for her money, was proved to have bound her daily to a post in her room, handcuffed her, hung her at times so tightly that only her toes could touch the ground, and thus slowly starved her to death. Eighty thousand persons are said to have been present at his execution, and it was with great difficulty that he could be kept out of the hands of the crowd, who desired to tear him limb from limb.[1] In Fetter Lane—one of the most crowded thoroughfares in London—Mrs. Brownrigg and her son, for the space of two years, subjected their apprentices to ill-usage so horrible that after the lapse of a century it is still well remembered. The wretched girls were stripped naked, scourged for the slightest offence till the blood streamed from their wounds, tied to a staple in the wall, beaten on the head till every feature was disfigured, flung into a coal-hole to sleep, famished till they could scarcely stand. One of them after two months of suffering succeeded in escaping; another, covered with wounds and attenuated by hunger, at last gave evidence against her tormentors; the third died in agonies from ill-treatment. The chief culprit was executed amid the wild delight of the mob, who, as she was driven to the gallows, ran by the side of the coach shouting to the chaplain to pray for her damnation.[2] In 1771, an informer fell into the hands of a gang of criminals, who tied a red-hot pair of tongs around his neck, put burning coals into his clothes, and then thrust his head into a fire. In the same year a woman was scourged through the most crowded part of London as far as Temple Bar for having decoyed young children from their parents, blinded them, and then employed them as beggars.[3]

---

[1] *Annual Register*, 1767, pp. 48, 49.

[2] Ibid. 1767, pp. 117–121, 190–197.

[3] Ibid. 1771, p. 65. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1771, p. 232.

The general election of 1768 made very little change in the strength and disposition of parties, and the interest of the nation was almost wholly concentrated on the contest in Middlesex. To later generations, however, this interest is less exclusive, for it was at this election that Charles Fox first entered the House of Commons, and that Horace Walpole, to whom we have hitherto been indebted for our fullest accounts of parliamentary proceedings, to the great loss of subsequent historians, gave up his seat.

Several months elapsed, during which Wilkes lay in prison, and it was hoped that the popular excitement would die away. The Government had become more and more disorganised. The removal of Sir Jeffrey Amherst from the Governorship of Virginia was intended to replace, in a time of great colonial difficulty, a non-resident by a resident governor, but it excited much notice because Amherst had been appointed by Chatham, and was one of his favourite officers, and because he was succeeded by Lord Bottetort, one of the avowed followers of Bute. The resignation—it might almost be called the expulsion—of Shelburne in October 1768 was still more significant, and a few days later Chatham himself resigned. His health and nerves seemed hopelessly disordered. Though incapable of giving any continuous attention to public affairs, he was able to perceive that the ministry were diverging greatly from his policy, and he resented the removal of Amherst and Shelburne. He accordingly wrote to the King in a strain that admitted of no refusal, and he was succeeded as Lord Privy Seal by Lord Bristol. The King's friends were continually becoming more powerful. Grafton, sick of his position, careless of politics, and panting only for freedom, was chiefly occupied in obtaining a divorce from his wife. The King was resolved upon the expulsion of Wilkes, and Lord North,

as his representative, urged it upon the ministry; but although he soon induced Grafton to consent, the opposition of Conway, Granby, Hawke, and Camden, during the first session, delayed the decision.[1]

In December, Cooke, who was the other member for Middlesex, died; Serjeant Glynn, who had recently distinguished himself as the defender of Wilkes, was set up as the popular candidate, and in spite of all the efforts of the Court and of the ministry, he won the seat. The election, like the preceding one, was very riotous; a man named Clarke, who was on the popular side, lost his life, and two men who belonged to the Court faction were tried for murder and found guilty. The verdict was received by the assembled crowd with an explosion of brutal joy, but it was afterwards shown conclusively that Clarke had been suffering from a disease which might have caused his death, and to the great indignation of the populace, the condemned men were pardoned. Wilkes did everything in his power to fan the flame. He accused Mansfield, in a petition to the House of Commons, of a gross irregularity in his trial in 1763. He accused Webb, the preceding Secretary of the Treasury, of having bribed a printer to give evidence against him; and having obtained a copy of the official letter of Lord Weymouth to the magistrates before the riot in St. George's Fields, he at once sent it to the 'St. James's Chronicle,' with a brief but violent note charging the ministry with having deliberately 'planned and determined upon' 'the horrid massacre of St. George's Fields,' and shown 'how long a hellish project can be brooded over by some infernal spirits without one moment's remorse.' The Government resolved to take notice of this letter. The natural course would have been to bring it

[1] Walpole's *Memoirs of George III.* iii. 200, 277, 316.

before the law courts, and if this was not done it was then for the House of Lords alone to resent an insult directed against one of its members. Lord Barrington, however, brought the letter before the House of Commons, which, assuming the functions of a law court, at once voted it a libel. Wilkes, upon being summoned, immediately acknowledged the authorship, claimed the thanks of the country for having exposed 'that bloody scroll,' and calmly remarked that 'he was only sorry he had not expressed himself upon that subject in stronger terms, and that he would certainly do so whenever a similar occasion should present itself.'[1] The Government then resolved to take the step about which they had so long hesitated, and on February 3, 1769, on the motion of Lord Barrington, Wilkes was expelled from Parliament on the ground of his three offences: the forty-fifth number of the 'North Briton,' the volume of obscene poetry, and the preface to the letter of Lord Weymouth.

George Grenville, who had taken so prominent a part in the early measures against Wilkes, but whose profound knowledge of constitutional law was seldom at fault, opposed this expulsion in a speech which was afterwards published at length, and which is the most favourable remaining specimen of his talents. He had no difficulty in showing that the resolution of the House was equally unconstitutional and impolitic. Three distinct charges were combined in one resolution, and it was quite possible that if the House had voted upon them separately, it would have pronounced each of them insufficient to justify the expulsion. For the forty-fifth

[1] The words—which are not in the abstract of Wilkes' speech in the Parliamentary debates—were quoted by G. Grenville in the very remarkable speech he afterwards made and corrected on the subject of the expulsion.—See Almon's *Collection of Scarce and Interesting Tracts*, iii. 31, 32.

number of the 'North Briton' Wilkes had been expelled by a previous Parliament, and there was nothing more certain in parliamentary law than that expulsion by one Parliament did not exclude a politician from the next. When Walpole was expelled from Parliament for alleged corruption, though he was not allowed again to sit in that Parliament, his election after the next dissolution was not only unopposed but unquestioned. The obscene poems had been written five years before. Wilkes was already expiating the offence in prison. They were in no respect an offence against the House, and a former House of Commons, violently hostile to Wilkes, had not thought fit to make them a ground of expulsion. The preface to Lord Weymouth's letter had been voted a libel, but it was not an offence against a member of the Lower House; it had not been brought before the law courts, and Blackstone, who was the chief legal defender of the ministerial policy, acknowledged that by itself it was no adequate reason for expulsion. The imprisonment of Wilkes would, it is true, incapacitate him for many months from discharging his duties in Parliament, but this imprisonment could not be regarded as a fresh crime, and it was quite certain that a mere inability to discharge parliamentary duties did not justify expulsion. Windham, while still a Member of Parliament, had been for more than two years in the Tower when the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended, and other members had been sent for long periods from London in the army or navy. It was added, too, that it was tolerably clear that the contest would not end with the expulsion of Wilkes. He would at once be re-elected, and the House would be thus confronted with a constitutional question of the gravest kind.

The warning was disregarded. The expulsion was carried by 219 to 137. On February 16 Wilkes was unanimously re-elected, and on the 17th the House, on

the motion of Lord Strange, voted that having been expelled he was incapable of sitting in that Parliament.

It is now generally acknowledged that this step was a distinct breach of the law. Whatever might be the injustice, whatever might be the impolicy of the first expulsion, the legal right of the House of Commons to expel an offending member was indisputable. But it was one thing to expel. It was quite another thing to disqualify. The first lay within the province of the House of Commons alone. The second could only be done by Act of Parliament. It was indeed true that the power of expulsion might be reduced to insignificance if the expelled person were immediately sent back by his constituents to the House. It was true that the incapacity the House pretended to create extended only to the existing House of Commons and would be terminated by a dissolution. It was true that it might be very reasonably argued that it was a great evil if the House of Commons should have no means of excluding from its walls a man who had outraged decency or systematically obstructed business, if his constituents approved of his conduct or if he happened to be the proprietor of a nomination borough. In the quiet days of George II. the constituencies would probably have acquiesced in the Wilkes decision as placidly as they acquiesced in the far graver usurpation of a House of Commons which systematically decided disputed elections by party votes, and thus after every dissolution brought into Parliament many men who were certainly not the real choice of the constituencies. But the days of this tolerance were now over, and a spirit had arisen in the country which watched the proceedings of the House with a jealous scrutiny unknown in the previous reign. Immediately on the declaration of incapacity a large body of the Middlesex gentlemen formed them-

selves into a society for defending the cause of the constituencies.

On March 16 there was a new election at Brentford, and Wilkes was again put forward and again unanimously elected. A merchant named Dingley desired to oppose him, but he could find no freeholder to second him, and was driven by violence from the hustings. Next day the House again pronounced the election void. Colonel Luttrell, the son of Lord Irnham, was then induced to vacate his seat in Parliament and to stand in opposition to the popular favourite. He was a young officer of the Guards, in no way connected with Middlesex, and his chief recommendation was his courage. The interference was indeed deemed so dangerous that his life was insured at Lloyd's Coffee House, and the chances of his surviving the contest became a favourite subject of bets. The election, however, contrary to expectation, was a very orderly one, the popular party being resolved to show that without any violence they could command an immense majority. Wilkes obtained 1,143 votes, Luttrell 296, and a lawyer named Whitaker, who had thrust himself into the contest, 5. After the poll a number of horsemen with colours flying and music playing, attended by several thousand people, went through St. James's Street and the Strand and over London Bridge to congratulate Wilkes, and that night London was illuminated. On the 14th the election of Wilkes was again pronounced void. On the 16th, after a long debate and by a majority of only 197 to 143, Luttrell was declared duly elected. A petition against the return was speedily signed, and it was argued in the House on May 8. After a debate of great power the election was confirmed by 221 to 152. Next day, amid a storm of popular insult, the King drove to Westminster to close the session.[1]

[1] Walpole's *Memoirs of George III.* iii. *Annual Register*, 1769. *Parl. Hist.* xvi.

Wilkes had lost his seat, but he had no reason to regret the issue of the struggle. Few of the most illustrious English statesmen have enjoyed a greater or a more enduring popularity or have exercised a more commanding power. When in April 1770 he was released from prison London was illuminated for joy, and the word 'liberty' in letters three feet high, blazed on the front of the Mansion House. In spite of all the efforts of the Court he was elected successively alderman and sheriff, and after a fierce struggle which lasted for three years, Lord Mayor, and then once more member of Parliament, and he governed with an almost absolute sway that City influence which was still one of the great forces in English politics. His old action against Lord Halifax, which had been suspended by his outlawry, was resumed. He obtained 4,000*l.* damages, and would probably have obtained more had it not been discovered during the trial that Grenville had in the earlier stages of the action promised Lord Halifax that in case of defeat his expenses should be paid by the Treasury. In addition to the cost of the election, a sum of about 20,000*l.* was raised by subscription to pay his debts, and provide him with a competence; and gifts, legacies, and testimonials poured in upon him from many quarters. He had also done more than any other single man to unite a divided and powerless Opposition; and to mark out the lines of political parties. The doctrine that a resolution of the House of Commons can neither 'make, alter, suspend, abrogate, nor annihilate the law of the land,' became the rallying cry of the party. Grenville on this question cordially concurred with Rockingham. Temple and Chatham were reconciled in 1769, and in the May of that year Temple wrote to Lady Chatham, 'Things tend apace to coalition among us.'[1] A violent attack of gout at last restored

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 358.

the troubled nerves of Chatham. In September 1769 he appeared unexpectedly at the King's levee; and when Parliament met in the following January, he took his place among the peers, and with an eloquence as powerful as that of his early days he denounced the unconstitutional measure that had taken place, and endeavoured to lead the House of Lords to the rescue of the constitution.

The debates that took place during several years on the Middlesex election brought into clear relief the conflicting doctrines about the relations between members and their constituencies, and, notwithstanding the great length to which they were protracted, the really essential arguments may be condensed in a small space. Blackstone, who was a member of the House, was put forward to defend the Government. He maintained that while a general incapacity to sit in the House of Commons can only be created by Act of Parliament, an incapacity limited to a single Parliament may be created by the House of Commons alone. This, it was said, is involved in the power of expulsion which it was admitted that the House possessed, and which without this addition would be absolutely nugatory, and it was established by the case of Walpole, who was expelled for alleged corruption, re-elected, and then declared incapable of sitting in that Parliament. It is remarkable that while Walpole and his friends complained bitterly that this expulsion was due to a purely factious combination, there is not the smallest reason to believe that they ever questioned the doctrine that it incapacitated the expelled member from sitting till after the dissolution. If indeed that doctrine were discarded, the right of expulsion would only expose the House to perpetual degradation and insult, for a large number of the members were as completely masters of their boroughs as of their estates, and they might, therefore, safely set the House at

defiance. Several precedents, more or less applicable, might be discovered in the stormy period between 1642 and 1660, but the case of Walpole was the one undoubted instance since the Revolution of an expelled member being at once re-elected, and Walpole was pronounced, on account of his expulsion, incapable of sitting in that Parliament.[1]

The Opposition, on the other hand, maintained that to be eligible as member of Parliament was the common right of all British subjects; that incapacities annulling, suspending, or abridging this common right can only be created by Act of Parliament; that, as a matter of fact, they had been so created, for the law enumerated and defined the several kinds of incapacity, and that it was completely beyond the competence of one branch of the Legislature by its sole action to change the law. Sir Edward Coke and other authorities had, it is true, laid down that as every court of justice has laws and customs for its direction, so there is a *lex et consuetudo parliamenti* which must be gathered out of the records and precedents of the two Houses and which forms part of the unwritten law of the land. But this 'law and

[1] In 1698 Mr. Wollaston, being a collector of duties, was 'expelled' from the House in obedience to a law which had recently disqualified those who held that office from sitting, and having given up the office he was re-elected and allowed to sit. The partisans of Wilkes maintained that this was a valid precedent, while his opponents thought the word 'expelled' was in this case improperly used by the Commons. The case was at least not one of penal expulsion. See a long discussion of it in 'A Fair Trial of the Important Question,' Almon's *Scarce and Interesting Tracts*, vol. iii. In 1715 Serjeant Comyns having refused to take the oath of qualification, the House determined that the votes given to him were lost, and gave the seat to the candidate who stood next on the poll; and in 1727 they adopted a similar course in a case where the elected person being a Commissioner of Customs was disqualified. In both of these cases, however, there was a statutory disqualification.—See Belsham's *Hist. of George III.* i. 242, 243.

custom of Parliament' can only exist when, in the absence of any provision of the statute law, it is possible to point to a long, uniform, and unchallenged series of parliamentary precedents. Were it otherwise the consequences would be of the most dangerous description, for it is certain that in the course of its long and turbulent history each House had often and in many directions transgressed its just limits. It was surely absurd to go to the anarchy of the Great Rebellion for legal precedents, and the case of Walpole could be of little real service to the ministry. The resolution incapacitating him alleged 'that having been expelled this House for a high breach of trust in the execution of his office and notorious corruption when Secretary of War, he was incapable of being re-elected a member to serve in the present Parliament.' The cause of the expulsion was thus cited, and it was a cause which might possibly justify the exclusion. The resolution incapacitating Wilkes assigned no reason except his expulsion by the House. The resolution incapacitating Walpole was passed at the petition of the rival candidate, but the House refused to give that candidate the seat, and no member sat for the borough of Lynn till after the dissolution. The House of Commons of George III. pronounced the candidate who had the smaller number of votes to be member for Middlesex. It was added that the Whig doctrine that the resolution of one House cannot create a disability, was maintained by no one more clearly than by Blackstone himself, who in his own 'Commentaries' had declared that to be capable of election to Parliament was the common right of all British subjects, and who had given a full enumeration of the legal incapacities which alone could bar this right.[1]

When the subject passed into the House of Lords, however, it was argued on somewhat different grounds,

[1] The passage was altered in later editions.

and the Government rallied chiefly upon a doctrine which was propounded by Lord Mansfield in a speech of extraordinary subtlety and power. He began by positively refusing to express any opinion about the legality of the decision which had been arrived at by the House of Commons. 'My sentiments about it,' he said, 'are locked in my own breast and shall die with me.' He would only say that 'whenever the statute law is silent he knew not where to look for the law of Parliament except in the proceedings and decisions of each House respectively.' He added that declarations of law made by either House of Parliament had always bad effects, for they had the semblance of legislative acts whereas they had no real legal force or validity. If either House as a legislative body thought fit to declare a particular doctrine to be law, he as a judge would pay no attention whatever to its declaration. But though the House of Commons had no power of laying down authoritatively general principles of law, it had a legal right of trying and deciding particular cases without appeal. Each House was not only a legislative assembly, it was also a judicial body, supreme in its own province, and all questions touching the seats of the lower House could be decided by that House alone. Its decision was final, for there was no other court in which they could be tried. The judges might be corrupt, the sentences might be erroneous, but the determination must be received and submitted to as the law of the land, for no existing body was competent to question or reverse it. The law might no doubt be changed by an Act of Parliament, in which of course the Lower House must concur, but as long as it was not changed, the judicial decision of the Commons on a question touching elections to their House was absolute and final. 'If they determined wilfully wrong it was iniquitous indeed, and in the highest degree detestable; but it was a crime of which no

human tribunal could take cognisance, and it lay between God and their conscience.' By the constitution of the country the House of Lords had no right to offer any advice to the Sovereign on the subject, or in any way to discuss, question, or impugn the judgment of the House of Commons on a matter which lay within the proper judicial province of that body.

The speech of Chatham in reply to these arguments was one of his greatest efforts, and considering the subtlety and delicacy of the distinctions discussed it gives a very high idea of his power, not only as an orator, but also as a political thinker and as a debater. The danger, indeed, of the doctrine of Mansfield was of the gravest kind. What limit could be put to the usurpations of a body which was itself the sole judge of its own privileges, which, by asserting in a judicial proceeding a power beyond the law, could establish that power without appeal, and was thus able under pretence of declaring the law to make the law? Every judicial body must indeed be vested with the powers and privileges necessary for performing the office for which it is appointed, but no Court of Justice can have a power inconsistent with or paramount to the known laws of the land. The representatives of the people were the trustees of the people, receiving from the people certain defined powers, and they could not abuse those powers more grossly than when they extended them beyond the limits of the law for the purpose of invading the rights of those from whom they were derived. That which distinguishes constitutional government from blank despotism is that no individual or corporation within it is above the law. This was the meaning of the great conflict of the Revolution, when the doctrine of passive obedience was exploded, when our kings were obliged to confess that their title to the throne and the rule of their government had no other foundation than the

known law of the land. But now this doctrine of passive obedience and of a power beyond the law was revived in favour of what was called the popular branch of the Legislature. 'What is this mysterious power undefined by law, unknown to the subject, which we must not approach without awe or speak of without reverence, which no man may question, but which all men must obey?' It is evident that it contained a germ of tyranny fatal to the very idea of constitutional government, and that it would make the House of Commons much less the representative than the ruler of the people. It was said that the Lords had no right to interfere even by the expression of an opinion. On the contrary, to do so was their bounden duty. As mediators between the King and the people it was for them to submit to the King the causes of the discontents of his people. As one of the three powers whose concurrence was necessary to every change of law, it was for them to protest when the law had been virtually changed without their assent. As hereditary guardians of the British Constitution, descendants of the barons who had extorted the Great Charter, it was for them to sound the warning when the Constitution was invaded. 'Where law ends, tyranny begins.' The attempt of one branch of the Legislature to pass beyond the limits that were assigned to it, and to place itself in the discharge of any of its functions above the law of the land, is an act of revolution, an act of treason against the Constitution. The House of Commons, by confusing the province of jurisdiction with that of legislation, by asserting what was virtually a sole power of altering or making the law, by invading the chartered rights which lay at the very heart of British liberty, had been guilty of such an act. The particular instance might appear to some of little moment, but the claim which was advanced extended to a complete subversion of the Con-

stitution. If no other power might even protest against the decision of the House of Commons on any matter relating to elections, that House might by an arbitrary declaration transfer or extinguish the franchises of great bodies of their constituents, change the whole law of election, and annul Acts of Parliament that had been carried for the express purpose of securing the rights of electors. Rather than that such a claim should be acquiesced in, extreme remedies should be resorted to; but it was one of the great advantages of a mixed Government that it did much to make such remedies unnecessary, for each part had a great power of restraining the aberrations of the others. The balance of the Constitution was now disturbed, and it was the duty of the House of Lords to aid in restoring it. They were asked to affirm by a solemn resolution the true doctrine of electoral rights, to petition for the dissolution of a House of Commons which had violated the Constitution, and to lead the way in a struggle for such a measure of parliamentary reform as would place the representative body in harmony with its constituents.

In addition to these arguments, another doctrine of a very extreme and indeed revolutionary kind was propounded by the popular party. They contended that the introduction of a single illegitimate element into the representative body was sufficient to invalidate all its proceedings, even in cases where the withdrawal or transfer of one vote would make no difference in the decision. In the words of Junius, 'If any part of the representative body be not chosen by the people, that part vitiates and corrupts the whole.' 'The arbitrary appointment of Mr. Luttrell invades the foundations of the laws themselves, as it manifestly transfers the right of legislation from those whom the people have chosen to those whom they have rejected.' The authority of Locke, who was generally regarded as the almost classi-

cal exponent of the principles of parliamentary government as established at the Revolution, was cited in favour of this doctrine. 'Governments,' he wrote, 'are dissolved from within when the Legislative is altered. The constitution of the Legislative is the first and fundamental act of society. . . . When any one or more shall take upon them to make laws whom the people have not appointed so to do, they make laws without authority, which the people are not therefore bound to obey.'[1] Neither Chatham nor Burke appears to have asserted this doctrine, but it was strongly maintained in one House by Shelburne, who was usually in alliance with Chatham, and in the other by Sir George Savile, who was one of the most respected members of the Rockingham party, and it formed the burden of numerous addresses and petitions.[2] To a practical politician it may perhaps be sufficient to say that if it were rigidly applied it would have invalidated every Act of Parliament upon the statute-book.

Independently of the question immediately at issue, the Middlesex election was extremely important from the impulse it gave to political agitation outside the House of Commons. There was at first some slight hesitation as to the form which the pressure of public opinion on the members should assume, and in a few cases instructions were sent by constituencies to their members, but it was soon agreed, in accordance with the urgent representations of Burke,[3] that petitions to the King were likely to be most efficacious. About seventeen counties,[4] and many cities and boroughs, sent

---

[1] Locke on *Government*, bk. ii. ch. xix.

[2] Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne*, ii. 205.

[3] *Burke's Correspondence*, i. 169, 176, 177, 184, 189, 235.

[4] *Annual Register*, 1770, pp. 56–58. Chatham says fifteen counties petitioned, and that 'these fifteen petitioning counties contain more people than all the rest of the kingdom, as they pay infinitely more land tax.'—*Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 169.

up addresses to the Throne, complaining that the rights of freeholders had been violated, and in most cases petitioning for a dissolution. Great efforts were made to procure counter addresses, but only the universities, four counties, and three or four cities responded, and the preponderance of opinion against the Government appeared enormous. A meeting summoned in the City to support the Government was attended by not more than thirty persons, and was soon broken up in confusion by the mob. Some of the merchants signed an address of confidence to the King, and went in a cavalcade to present it, but they were attacked on their way, and it was only after a struggle of some hours that a small remnant succeeded in reaching the palace. In the meantime a hearse with four horses, followed by a long tumultuous procession, and bearing escutcheons representing the murder of Allen and the murder of Clarke, was drawn through the Strand to St. James's Palace, to Carlton House, to Cumberland House, and to the residence of Lord Weymouth. The railings of the palace were defended with difficulty; many conspicuous persons were insulted, and the white staff of Lord Talbot was broken in his hand. Five rioters taken in the act were reserved for prosecution, but the grand jury refused to find a true bill against them.[1] The manifest partiality of juries was one of the most alarming symptoms of the time, and one of the chief encouragements to the prevailing violence.[2] For months

[1] *Annual Register*, 1769, pp. 84, 87. Walpole's *Memoirs of George III.* iii. 350–353.

[2] The King writing to Lord North complained bitterly of 'the factious and partial conduct of the grand jury,' and added, 'if there be no means by law to quell riots, and if juries forget they are on their oath to be guided by facts not faction, this constitution must be overthrown, and anarchy (the most terrible of all evils) must ensue.'—*Correspondence of George III. and Lord North*, i. 8. The ministers described 'the unhappy disposition of the people to be such that

Luttrell was unable to appear in the streets.[1] A man was arrested in the act of posting up a supposed speech of Oliver Cromwell when he drove the members of the Long Parliament out of their House.[2] In July 1769 the Duke of Bedford having imprudently gone to Exeter to receive some local honours, was attacked in the cathedral, and obliged to escape by a private way into the bishop's palace. At Honiton he was assailed with stones, bull-dogs were let loose at him, and his life was in serious danger.[3] Language breathing all the violence of revolution had become habitual. Barré said in Parliament that disregard to petitions 'might teach the people to think of assassination.'[4] A silver goblet was presented to Wilkes by the Court of Common Council when he was elected sheriff, and he chose as the subject of ornamentation the death of Cæsar, with an inscription from Churchill,

> May every tyrant feel
> The keen deep searchings of a patriot steel.

Alderman Townsend, one of the most active of the City politicians, refused to pay the land-tax on the ground that the Parliament which imposed it was an illegal one, and he actually brought the case before the Court of King's Bench.

In July 1769 the Lord Mayor and Livery of London presented an address to the King arraigning the whole conduct of his ministers as subversive of the constitution, on which alone the relation between the House of Brunswick and its subjects depends; and in the follow-

---

juries, under the influence of the general infatuation, could hardly be got to do justice to soldiers under prosecution.' — *Annual Register*, 1769, p. 62. According to Walpole, 'in the hands of a Middlesex jury at that time no man's life was safe.'—*Memoirs of George III.* iii. 312.

[1] Ibid. iii. 359.

[2] See Cavendish, *Debates*, i. 101.

[3] Walpole, p. 378. *Annual Register*, 1769, pp. 117, 118.

[4] Walpole, iv. 57.

ing March they presented a new remonstrance, couched in language such as had perhaps never before been used by a public body to its sovereign, except in the course or upon the eve of a revolution. 'Under the same secret and malign influence,' they said, 'which through each successive administration has defeated every good and suggested every bad intention, the majority of the House of Commons have deprived your people of their dearest rights. They have done a deed more ruinous in its consequences than the levying of ship-money by Charles I., or the dispensing power assumed by James II., a deed which must vitiate all the future proceedings of this Parliament, for the acts of the Legislature itself can no more be valid without a legal House of Commons than without a legal prince upon the throne. . . . Parliament,' they continued, 'is corruptly subservient to the designs of your Majesty's ministers. Had the Parliament of James II. been as submissive to his commands as the Parliament is at this day to the dictates of a minister, instead of clamours for its meeting, the nation would have rung as now with outcries for its dissolution.'[1] It is a remarkable fact that Chatham himself was suspected of having drawn up this document, and that he regarded it with unqualified approbation. The King in his answer described it—surely with great justice—as disrespectful to himself and injurious to his Parliament; but this answer was treated by Chatham and others as a violation of the article of the Bill of Rights which secured to subjects the liberty of petition. The London Livery, undeterred by the rebuff, presented another and scarcely less insolent address, and when the King received it with a few words of disapprobation, the Lord Mayor Beckford, contrary to all precedent, delivered a long rejoinder, which was composed for him

[1] *Parl. Hist.* xvi. 893, 894.

by Horne, and which was afterwards engraven on his statue in the Guildhall, declaring that whoever had alienated his Majesty's affections from his loyal subjects in general and from London in particular was an enemy to his Majesty's person and family, and a betrayer of the Constitution 'as it was established at the glorious and necessary Revolution.' On the other hand, both Houses of Parliament supported by large majorities the most violent proceedings and doctrines of the ministers. Lord North was accused of having declared that petitions for a dissolution of Parliament were unconstitutional if not illegal,[1] and the King, laying his hand on his sword, exclaimed, 'Sooner than yield to a dissolution I will have recourse to this.'[2]

There was little or nothing to counterbalance the unpopularity of the Government. In America discontent and disaffection were becoming continually more formidable, and in Europe the authority of England had visibly declined. The heroic struggle which the Corsicans under Paoli had for many years waged against their Genoese oppressors had excited only a languid interest, and in December 1763 a proclamation was issued, forbidding English subjects to assist the 'Corsican rebels;' but when the French purchased the island from Genoa in 1768, disregarded the strong protest of the English ambassador, and crushed all resistance by overwhelming forces, the national jealousy of England became actively sensitive. The well-known book of Boswell greatly added to the interest, and the Duke of Devonshire and some other leading persons subscribed large sums to assist the insurgents. The value of the new acquisition

---

[1] *Parl. Hist.* xvi. 578. He afterwards is said to have explained away his meaning, and it is very probable that he was not quite accurately reported. Lord Egmont in the House of Lords described the petitions as 'treasonable.'—*Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 419.

[2] Walpole's *George III.* iv. 60.

of France was enormously exaggerated by Burke[1] and by many other politicians, and it was absurdly represented as sufficient to turn the balance of power in the Mediterranean. By a strange chance which no human sagacity could have predicted, it proved in truth even more important than was feared, for it made Napoleon Buonaparte a French subject.

Nearly at the same time the question of the Falkland Islands brought England to the verge of a war with Spain. These islands appear to have been first seen by Davis in 1592, and by Hawkins in 1594, but their present name was only given to them in the reign of William, and no attempt was made to colonise them till Anson described them in his 'Voyage' as valuable in themselves, and especially valuable on account of their nearness to Chili in the event of a Spanish war. In 1748 an English expedition to the Falkland Islands was planned, but Wall, the Spanish ambassador, represented in such strong terms that the Spaniards possessed the exclusive dominion of the South Sea, and would treat any intrusion as an act of war, that the design was relinquished. In 1765, however, it was resumed. Lord Egmont instructed Captain Byron to take formal possession of the Islands in the name of his Britannic Majesty, and in the following year a garrison was established and a small wooden fort erected. The transaction appears to have been at first almost unnoticed, but in 1769 the Spaniards demanded the immediate abandonment of the island which had been occupied, and, their demand being disregarded, they next year sent out a powerful expedition, which captured the entire garrison, detained a British frigate for twenty days, and summarily expelled the British from the

[1] Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne*, ii. 119–124. Burke said, 'Corsica, a French province, was terrible to him.' Cavendish, *Debates*, i. 40.

South Sea. Such an act of violence and insult, following as it did the obstinate refusal of Spain to pay the Manilla ransom, seemed to make war inevitable. At last, however, after much not very dignified negotiation, the Spanish king agreed to disavow the act of his servant and to restore the garrison, maintaining, however, his old claim of right, and receiving, it is said, a verbal assurance that the English would speedily evacuate the island.

These events were not fitted to strengthen an unpopular Government, and a few months after the general election the ministers were compelled to ask for the sum of 513,000*l.* in payment of the debts of the King. In the last reign, certain funds, which were intended to produce 800,000*l.* a year, were appropriated to the Civil List, with the understanding that if they fell below that amount Parliament would supply the deficiency. In the present reign, it was determined to abolish the element of uncertainty, and a fixed annual sum of 800,000*l.* was voted for the Civil List. Besides this, the King possessed considerable revenues which were not within the cognisance of Parliament. He had inherited a large sum from his economical predecessor, he had the hereditary revenues derived from the Principality of Wales and the Duchy of Cornwall, and he derived something from duties which had been recently imposed by royal prerogative in the new West Indian Islands. It was believed—probably with much truth—that these revenues were amply sufficient for the purposes for which they were intended, and that the debt was due to an expenditure which could not be openly avowed. It was the first of a long series which extended over the whole reign. All parties were prepared to pay it, but the Opposition contended that Parliament should at least receive a detailed account of the manner in which it was incurred, and attempts were unsuccess-

fully made in both Houses to obtain an inquiry into the state and expenditure of the Civil List.[1]

The personal unpopularity of the Government was also very great, and the weakness of the Prime Minister was especially conspicuous. Grafton, though he is now chiefly remembered as the object of the most savage of all the invectives of Junius, was certainly not destitute of the qualities of a statesman, and he was judged very favourably by some of the ablest of his contemporaries. Chatham, for a time, gave him an unreserved confidence. Conway, in 1770, refused to serve under any other leader. Camden assured him that he would 'rather see him at the head of the Government then than any other man in the kingdom;' and a letter of Charles Fox has been preserved in which that great statesman declared that there was no other chief he would more willingly follow. But his better qualities were all marred and clouded by faults very natural to a young man of great position, strong passions, weak character, and moderate ambition, who, without any of the long apprenticeship of office, and contrary to his own wishes, found himself at the age of thirty-two Prime Minister of England. Had Chatham been able to remain at the helm, Grafton, under his guidance, would probably have won an honourable place in English history; but at the head of a divided Cabinet, surrounded by uncongenial colleagues, outvoted in his Cabinet on important questions, and exposed in turn to the outrages of the populace and to the blandishments of the Court, his character and his convictions utterly failed. His notorious indolence, vacillation, and indifference, the contrast between his old friendship with Wilkes and his recent policy, and the careless and undisguised profligacy which led him, on one occasion, when still Prime Minister, to appear

[1] *Annual Register*, 1769, p. 63. *Parl. Hist.* xvi. 843–852.

publicly at the opera with a well-known courtesan, were all sources of scandal or of weakness. In private life he was esteemed an honourable man, and he had but little of the ambition which is the chief cause of political treachery, but he had abandoned Rockingham, he had abandoned Wilkes, and he was now rapidly abandoning Chatham.

The conduct of two of the most important of his colleagues was scarcely more respectable. One of the most remarkable characteristics of the ministry of Chatham was that it exactly reproduced the old type of divided administrations which prevailed in England immediately after the Revolution. The very idea of a consistent Government policy to which all its members were pledged had almost disappeared, and each minister restricted himself mainly to his own department. This was the inevitable consequence of the manner in which the administration had been formed, and of the withdrawal of the great statesman who alone could have given it a steady and consistent direction. General Conway had been persuaded by Horace Walpole to abandon the Rockingham connection, and to retain under Chatham the position not only of Secretary of War, but even of leader of the House of Commons, in order to exclude Grenville from that post;[1] but already, at a time when Chatham was not yet incapacitated by illness, Horace Walpole assures us that Conway, being offended at the dismissal of Lord Mount Edgecumbe, 'dropped all intercourse with Lord Chatham, and though he continued to conduct the King's business in the House of Commons, he would neither receive nor pay any deference to the minister's orders, acting for or against as he approved or disliked his measures.'[2] It was quite consistent with this beginning that he should still have

[1] Walpole's *George III.* ii. 339–341. [2] Ibid. ii. 385.

remained in office when Townshend, by reviving the scheme of American taxation, reversed the policy which, in the Rockingham administration, Conway had done so much to carry into effect. In January 1768, however, four months after the death of Townshend, Conway, partly in consequence of his disapproval of the conduct of the Government towards the Duke of Portland, and partly in consequence of the growing influence of the Bedford faction, resigned the seals of office, but, notwithstanding this, he was persuaded by the King to continue 'Minister of the House of Commons,' and member of the Cabinet in the ministry with which, on most points, he was both personally and politically at variance.[1] It was soon made a matter of complaint by the Bedford section of the Government that 'there was no acting with Conway, who always in the House adhered to his own opinion, and would not acquiesce in what was determined in council.'[2] Yet, in spite of all this, he remained Cabinet minister and apparent leader of the House of Commons, and he still retained this position when Chatham returned to active politics, although he entirely agreed with Chatham on the main questions that were in dispute. He appears to have supposed that his personal friendship for Grafton, and the fact that he was drawing no salary, justified his position.

The failure of the Chancellor was equally conspicuous. As a lawyer, Camden was surpassed by no contemporary except Mansfield. In Parliament, some good judges preferred the simple, colloquial, and unstrained lucidity of his style to the subtle and elaborate rhetoric of his great rival,[3] and the strong passion for popularity which sometimes showed itself, if not in the substance at least

---

[1] Walpole's *George III.* iii. 148–150.

[2] Ibid. p. 311.

[3] Nicholls' *Recollections of George III.* ii. 128.

in the expression of his judgments, gave him a bias in favour of liberty at a time when it was gravely endangered. But Camden, like Grafton, was unfit to stand alone, and on the eclipse of Chatham he sank into insignificance. He saw the whole character of the ministry changed by the growing predominance of that Bedford faction which was most hostile to the policy of Chatham. He saw the Government of which he was a member pursuing, on the two great questions of American taxation and of the Middlesex election, a course which was directly opposed to his opinions, yet he still remained at his post. He was full of difficulties and irresolution. He did not wish by resigning to throw the Government of the country into confusion, or into hands still more hostile to Chatham and to his policy. He expected the return of Chatham, and till his recovery everything seemed provisional and unsettled. He was attached to Grafton, and a strong personal interest bound him to office. He had risen to the first rank in his profession, and had held the great office of Chief Justice of Common Pleas before he accepted his Chancellorship; but if he now resigned, he sank at once into comparative poverty. There was then no regular retiring pension for an ex-Chancellor, and Camden had nothing to fall back upon but a pension of 1,500*l.* a year, which had been procured for him by Chatham.

At one time he appears to have disbelieved in the reality of the illness of Chatham, and he spoke of his former leader with much bitterness.[1] He abandoned

[1] William Gerard Hamilton wrote to Temple (July 20, 1767), 'The idea of continuing Lord Camden as a friend of Lord Chatham's is extremely entertaining if the accounts which I hear are true, and my authority is such that I have not a doubt of them; and they are that, in all places, the most violent man against Lord Chatham, and the harshest interpreter of his long sickness and of his late conduct in every particular, is Lord Camden.'—*Grenville Papers*, iv. 64. In his private letter to Chatham,

London during the Middlesex riots. He withdrew more and more from ministerial business. He was thrown into an agony of distress by the libels which described him as ungrateful to Chatham. He was silent in debate, and often absent from the Cabinet Councils. He wished to resign on the resignation of Chatham, but suffered himself to be dissuaded by Grafton. Yet he never protested or even distinctly intimated his opinion. In confidential letters to Grafton he urged the grave political danger of the course which was being pursued about the Middlesex election; but when the question was debated in the Cabinet he withdrew, and Gratton afterwards asserted that the Chancellor had never informed him that the vote of incapacity was contrary to law. Their difference about the policy of the measure had produced a coldness between them, and in the summer of 1769 they appear to have had little intercourse. Finding himself in a minority in the ministry, incapable of influencing its decisions, and unwilling at this time to destroy it by resigning, Camden abstained from giving any opinion to his colleagues, and confined himself to his judicial business. Yet it is certain that he communicated his opinion to Chatham when Chatham had resigned office and was preparing for opposition,[1] and at last, when his old leader reappeared in the House, and denounced the ministerial policy as a violation of the Constitution, the Chancellor, who should

written January 2, 1768, Junius said, 'The Chancellor on whom you had particular reasons to rely has played a sort of fast and loose game, and spoken of your lordship with submission or indifference according to the reports he heard of your health, nor has he altered his language until he found you were really returning to town.'—*Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 303. This coincidence has been justly pointed out as one of the many slight indications that Junius was well acquainted with the information then current in Lord Temple's circle.

[1] See *Grenville Papers*, iv. 402, 405. *Parl. Hist.* xvi. 825. *Adolphus*, i. 410.

naturally have been its foremost defender, arose to express his full concurrence with the attack. 'For some time,' he said, 'I have beheld with silent indignation the arbitrary measures of the ministers. I have drooped and hung down my head in council, and disapproved by my looks those steps which I knew my avowed opposition could not prevent. . . . I now proclaim to the world that I entirely coincide in the opinion expressed by my noble friend, whose presence again reanimates us, respecting the unconstitutional and illegal vote of the House of Commons. . . . By their violent and tyrannical conduct ministers have alienated the minds of the people from his Majesty's Government. . . . A spirit of discontent has spread into every corner of the kingdom, and is every day increasing. If some methods are not devised to appease the clamours so universally prevalent, I know not whether the people, in despair, may not become their own avengers, and take the redress of grievances into their own hands.'

It was impossible that any ministry could permit a Chancellor to continue in office who denounced in such terms the main line of policy of the Cabinet of which he was a member, and nothing could be more uncandid than the language of the Opposition, who described the dismissal of Camden as an unwarrantable interference with judicial liberty, the dismissal of an upright and independent judge, because he had given an opinion in accordance with the law. The conduct of Camden was extremely discreditable, and it ought to have been followed by an immediate resignation. It was probably thought, however, that a dismissal would have more effect upon public opinion than a resignation, and Chatham strongly supported the Chancellor in remaining at his post.[1] He was dismissed on January 17,

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 389.

1770, about a week after his speech.[1] Lord Granby, the popular Commander-in-Chief, took the first opportunity in the House of Commons of declaring that he would always lament the vote he had given in favour of the incapacity of Wilkes as the greatest misfortune of his life, and a few days after he resigned his office. In the minor or ornamental departments of the Administration there were several resignations, which implied a considerable loss of Parliamentary influence. The Dukes of Beaufort and Manchester, the Earls of Coventry and of Huntingdon, gave up their places at the Court. James Grenville, ever faithful to Chatham, resigned his office of Vice-Treasurer of Ireland, and Dunning that of Solicitor-General. On January 28 another and much more important resignation was very unexpectedly announced. Grafton had recanted nothing and modified nothing, and he defended the policy of his Government boldly and ably in the House of Lords,[2] but he was disgusted with his position and with the storm of obloquy around him; he disdainfully threw up his post, refusing to give any specific reason,[3] and retired for a time into private life. Lord North, who was already Chancellor of the Exchequer, was his successor.

The post which was most difficult to fill was that of Chancellor. Mansfield positively refused to exchange

---

[1] Lord Temple described this incident as 'the dismissal of the virtuous and independent lord who sat on the woolsack, in order to supply his place by some obsequious lawyer who would do as he was commanded.' Lord Shelburne 'hoped there would not be found in the kingdom a wretch so base and mean-spirited as to accept the Seals on the conditions on which they were offered.'—Albemarle's *Life of Rockingham*, ii. 157.

[2] Rigby wrote (May 14, 1770), 'I think the very best speech I ever heard in my life was the Duke of Grafton's reply to Chatham, a very memorable part of which was the most solemn declaration that a man can make in public, never to act again in public business with Lord Chatham.'—*Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 412.

[3] Walpole's *George III.* iv. 87.

his Chief Justiceship for a dignity which was so perilous and so precarious, and Sir Eardley Wilmot, the Chief Justice of Common Pleas, who detested and despised party politics, was equally peremptory in his refusal. The Court had at this moment very little legal ability at its disposal, and the candidate who appeared most suitable was Charles Yorke, a younger son of the great Lord Hardwicke, and brother of one of the most intimate friends of Rockingham. When a very young man, he had gained a considerable literary reputation by a once popular, though now forgotten, book called 'Athenian Letters,' and he had become Solicitor-General before the death of George II., and Attorney-General in the troubled Ministry that succeeded. He resigned at last, but only after the proceedings against Wilkes. He then separated himself completely from the party of Bute, but still maintained a somewhat independent line. In the debates that grew out of the Wilkes prosecutions he condemned the principle of general warrants, though contending that they had been frequently employed; but he maintained in opposition to Pitt, and in a speech which extorted the highest eulogy from Walpole, that parliamentary privilege does not extend to cases of libel. In the Rockingham Ministry he was again Attorney-General, and he appeared now completely identified with that party, and resigned his post on the accession of Pitt. With something more than the usual keenness of professional ambition, he combined a very unprofessional sensitiveness of character; though still in the prime of life, and on the whole an exceedingly prosperous man, he was restless, discontented, morbid, nervous, and vacillating, and the natural infirmities of his temperament were at this time aggravated by ill health.

He had been thought of as Chancellor by Charles Townshend, when that statesman contemplated a seces-

sion from Chatham, but he had remained attached to the Rockingham connection, and had pledged himself to Rockingham and to his brother to decline the post which the Duke of Grafton had offered him. He at first honourably fulfilled his promise; but the King, who was passionately interested in maintaining his Ministry, resolved to interpose, and he exerted all his personal influence to gain his point. His efforts in a private interview were in vain; Yorke, though restless and agitated through disappointed ambition, adhered to his pledge and refused to desert his party, and the negotiation appeared to have terminated. On the next day, however, when he was attending a levee, he was again called into the closet of the King, who renewed with intense earnestness his entreaties. Of the particulars of the interview, we only know that the King appealed to his loyalty as a subject not to abandon him in his distress, that he appealed to his self-interest as a lawyer, intimating to him that if he now refused them, the Seals, which were the highest object of his ambition, would under no possible circumstances be again offered to him, and that he at length succeeded by long persistence in over-bearing his opposition, and, in the words of Lord Hardwicke, 'compelling him' to accept the post. The unhappy man went from the royal cabinet to his brother's house, where he met the leaders of the Opposition. He felt at once the full enormity of what he had done, and fled broken-hearted to his own house. In three days he was a dead man. According to the version circulated by his family, his death was due to natural disease, accelerated by excitement and mental anguish. According to another and more probable account, he died by his own hand. The patent which raised him to the peerage had been made out, and awaited only the impression of the Great Seal. When he was dying, he was asked to authorise that impres-

sion, but he refused, and added, with a shudder, that he hoped the Seal was no longer in his custody.[1]

It might have been supposed that by this time, at least, Conway, who still shared most of the sentiments of the Rockingham Whigs, would have perceived that it was his duty to sever himself from the Ministry, but he still for some time continued in the Cabinet. In January 1770, shortly after the death of Yorke, the King offered him the Mastership of the Ordnance, which was vacant by the resignation of Granby. The office was a military, not a political one, but to accept it at this critical moment was evidently to involve himself still further in his connection with the Court. After infinite hesitation he at last arrived at a characteristic compromise, and agreed to discharge the duties of the office without accepting the salary. As long as Grafton remained he determined to remain in the Cabinet, and he did his utmost to induce Grafton to remain. The resignation of Grafton at last brought this strange and discreditable scene to an end, and Conway then detached himself from the Administration.[2]

The opposition of Chatham to the Government was at this time of the most violent description, and his language recalls that which he was accustomed to employ in his early contests with Walpole and Carteret. He repeatedly, in different forms, endeavoured to obtain from the Lords a resolution affirming the unconstitutional character of the decision of the Commons about Wilkes. He brought forward a resolution asking for the dissolution of Parliament, and even a Bill for reversing the decision of the Lower House. He denounced the conduct of the Commons in language little less vehe-

---

[1] Harris' *Life of Hardwicke*, iii. 465–479. Campbell's *Chancellors*, vii. 96–112.

[2] Walpole's *George III.* iv. 55, 56, 60, 61, 193.

ment than that of the City remonstrance, and intimated not obscurely that if persisted in it would justify rebellion. Of the conduct of the King, of the King's ministers, and especially of the King's friends, he spoke with scarcely an affectation of reserve. 'These measures,' he said in one of his speeches, 'made a part of that unhappy system which had been formed in the present reign with a view to new model the Constitution as well as the Government. . . . The Commons had slavishly obeyed the commands of his Majesty's servants, and had proved to the conviction of every man, what might have been only matter of suspicion before, that ministers held a corrupt influence in Parliament. It was demonstrable, it was indisputable.'[1] Speaking of his own experience as a minister, he said, in words which read like an echo of those of Grenville and Rockingham: 'I was duped, I was deceived. I soon found that there was no original administration to be suffered in this country. The same secret influence still prevailed which had put an end to all the successive administrations as soon as they opposed or declined to act under it. . . . The obstacles and difficulties which attended every great and public measure did not arise from those out of government. They were suggested, nourished, and supported by that secret influence I have mentioned, and by the industry of those very dependents; first by secret treachery, then by official influence, afterwards in public councils. A long train of these practices has at length unwillingly convinced me that there is something behind the throne greater than the King himself.'[2] In Grafton he expressed himself completely deceived. 'There was in his conduct from the time of my being taken ill, a gradual deviation from everything that had been settled and solemnly agreed to by his Grace both as to measures

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 418. [2] Ibid. 422.

and men, till at last there were not left two planks together of the ship which had been originally launched.'[1] He strenuously supported an inquiry into the expenditure which had caused the King's debts, intimating very clearly that in his judgment the debts had been incurred in corrupting the representatives, and he asked whether the Sovereign 'means, by drawing the purse-strings of his subjects, to spread corruption through the people, to procure a Parliament like a packed jury, ready to acquit his ministers at all adventures?'[2] When the King made his famous answer rebuking the Corporation of London for the disrespectful language of their petition, Chatham moved a resolution censuring those who had advised the King to give such an answer, on the ground that the legal right of the subject to petition for redress of grievances had been indiscriminately checked and reprimanded.[3] Quoting from Robertson, he reminded the House of Lords how Charles V. had once 'cajoled and seduced' the peers of Castile to join him in overturning that part of the Cortes which represented the people; how 'they were weak enough to adopt, and base enough to be flattered with an expectation that by assisting their master in this iniquitous purpose they would increase their own strength and importance,' and how, as a just and natural consequence, they soon 'exchanged the constitutional authority of peers for the titular vanity of grandees.'[4] He reprobated with the utmost vehemence the patient attitude of the Ministry towards Spain; spoke of that Power in language which could only have been used on the supposition that war with her was inevitable and desirable, blamed the ministers severely for the neglect into which they had suffered

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 423, 425.
[2] Ibid. pp. 424, 426.
[3] Ibid. p. 453.
[4] Ibid. p. 372.

the naval and military services to fall, enumerated in a speech of great power and knowledge the different measures that were required to restore them to efficiency, and at the same time, with his usual independence, denounced the conduct of Wilkes and of the popular party, who by raising an outcry against the system of press-gangs were crippling the strength of the nation.[1]

Chatham at this time took great pains to effect an union with the other Whigs, and especially with Rockingham, and he appears to have become at last sensible of the error he had made in so often discarding or repudiating their assistance. His old distinctive doctrine of the necessity of breaking up parties now disappears. 'There are men who, if their own services were forgotten, ought to have an hereditary merit with the House of Hanover. . . . I would not wish the favours of the Crown to flow invariably in one channel. But there are some distinctions which are inherent in the nature of things. There is a distinction between right and wrong—between Whig and Tory. . . . An administration must be popular that it may begin with reputation. It must be strong within itself that it may proceed with vigour and decision.'[2] No sound ministry could be maintained by fraud or even by exclusive systems of family connections or powerful friendships, but at the same time he was careful to add that no one valued more 'that honourable connection which arises from a disinterested concurrence in opinion upon public measures, or from the sacred bond of private friendship and esteem.' Of Rockingham himself, both in public and private, he spoke with deep respect. 'As for Lord Rockingham,' he wrote to Calcraft, 'I have a firm reliance on his zeal for liberty, and will not separate from

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 2–18.
[2] Ibid. pp. 17, 18.

him.'[1] 'His whole language,' he wrote, in another letter, after an interview with Rockingham, 'was as I expected, honourable, just, and sensible. My esteem and confidence in his lordship's upright intentions grow from every conversation with him.'[2] In seconding a motion of Rockingham he took occasion to say that he wished this to be considered as a public demonstration of his cordial union with that statesman. 'There has been a time, my lords,' he added, 'when those who wished well to neither of us, who wished to see us separated for ever, found a sufficient gratification for their malignity against us both. But that time is happily at an end. The friends of this country will, I doubt not, hear with pleasure that the noble lord and his friends are now united with me and mine, upon a principle which, I trust, will make our union indissoluble. . . . No ministerial artifices, no private offers, no secret seduction, can divide us.'[3]

The picture was somewhat overcoloured. The cor-

---

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 439. In one of the last speeches Chatham made (Dec. 5, 1777), there is a remarkable passage which can be construed into little less than a confession that the line which he had adopted about party government in the first years of the reign was a mistake. 'For fifteen years,' he said, 'there had been a system at St. James's of breaking all connections, of extinguishing all principle. A few men had got an ascendency where no man should have a personal ascendency; by the executive powers of the State being at their command they had been furnished with the means of creating divisions. This brought pliable men, not capable men, into the highest and most responsible situations, and to such men was the government of this once glorious empire now entrusted.' — Thackeray's *Life of Chatham*, ii. 343.

[2] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 481.

[3] Ibid. p. 408. Lord Fitzwilliam reported to Rockingham, November 1769, a conversation in which Chatham said: 'For my own part I am grown old, and find myself unable to fill any office of business; but this I am resolved upon, that I will not even sit at council but to meet the friends of Lord Rockingham; whatever differences may have been between us they must be forgotten. The state of the

respondence of Chatham himself, and the correspondence of Burke, who was the most confidential as he was by far the ablest friend of Rockingham, suffice to show that the jealousy that once divided the two parties was by no means extinct. On the Rockingham side there was some very natural personal resentment, and also a constant fear lest Chatham should resume his old policy of breaking up that strong party organisation which in the opinion of Burke was the sole method of putting an end to the impotence of successive administrations and restraining the influence of the Crown. On the side of Chatham, there was a stronger sympathy with the democratic element in the country, and a proneness to employ stronger language and to resort to more energetic measures than the Rockinghams desired. 'The Marquis,' he wrote in one of his letters, 'is an honest and honourable man, but "moderation, moderation," is the burden of the song among the body. For myself I am resolved to be in earnest for the public, and shall be a scarecrow of violence to the gentle warblers of the grove, the moderate Whigs and temperate statesmen.'[1] Still in public the two parties were agreed, and a coalition was formed against the Government which once would have been invincible. As Philip Francis afterwards wrote, 'North succeeded to what I believe he himself and every man in the kingdom at that time thought a forlorn hope.'[2] Chatham, Rockingham, Grenville, and Temple were united under the same banner, while a fever of public opinion had been ex-

---

nation is such that all private animosities must subside. He, and he alone, has a knot of spotless friends such as ought to govern this kingdom.' See, too, a similar conversation reported by the Duke of Portland.—Albemarle's *Life of Rockingham*, ii. 142, 143.

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 468.

[2] See the autobiographical sketch in Parkes and Merivale's *Life of Francis*, i. 362.

cited in the country by the Middlesex election which had never been paralleled since the fall of Walpole.

The result was the complete triumph of the Government. The influence of the Court was now so great, and its attractive power so irresistible, that in both Houses it commanded a steady and unflinching majority. The House of Lords, which in the case of the Aylesbury electors under Queen Anne, had obtained a most legitimate popularity by its defence of the rights of electors against the usurpations of the Commons, now carried every resolution of the Ministers by a large majority. It abdicated one of its most important functions by formally declining to take any step in the Middlesex election, on the ground that its interference would be unconstitutional; and for some time, in order to diminish as much as possible the effects of the eloquence of Chatham, it carefully excluded all strangers from its debates. In spite of the coalition of the scattered fragments of the Whig party; in spite of the petitions which poured in from every part of the country against the Government; in spite of America, of Corsica, and of the Falkland Islands; in spite of the manifest decline of the reputation of England, which had recently been so great, and of the naval and military services, which had recently been so efficient, the majority of the Government was unbroken. In Lord North the King had found a servant of admirable tact, ability, and knowledge, and new recruits were speedily obtained. The Great Seal having been placed for about a year in Commission, was bestowed on Bathurst, who, though an undistinguished lawyer and insignificant politician, held it for more than seven years. Lord Granby, who was the most popular of the recent seceders from the Ministry, died in October 1770. George Grenville died in the following month, and three months later, Lord Suffolk, who pretended to lead the Grenville

party, abandoned all his former principles, and joined the Ministry as Privy Seal. Whately, the most confidential friend of Grenville, took the same course. The chief members of the Bedford faction had already gone over, and the Duke, who had for some time been excluded from public life by blindness and ill-health, died in the beginning of 1771. Sir Edward Hawke was replaced at the Admiralty by Lord Sandwich. Grafton, who had once professed to be the most devoted follower of Chatham, solemnly pledged himself, in a speech in May 1770, never again to act with him in public business,[1] and a year later, when Lord Suffolk, on the death of Halifax, exchanged the office of Privy Seal for that of Secretary of State, he accepted the vacant post, though with the characteristic condition that he should not be required to attend the Cabinet.[2] Thurlow, who was advanced to the position of Attorney-General, showed an amount of legal and debating power which restored the strength of the Ministry in the department where it was most weak, and, to the astonishment and scandal even of the corrupt assembly at St. Stephen's, he was soon joined by Wedderburn.

This very able Scotchman—one of the ablest and most corrupt of the many able and corrupt lawyers who in the eighteenth century were conspicuous in English politics—though he first entered Parliament under the patronage of Bute, had for some time been conspicuous among the opponents of the Court. His repeated and eloquent denunciations of the American policy of the Government, his magnificent defence of the rights of electors in the case of the Middlesex election, and his resignation of his borough seat because its patron was opposed to the popular cause, had made him one

---

[1] *Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 412.

[2] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 179.

of the idols of the people. Clive, who was at this time in opposition, at once provided him with a new seat. His name was a favourite toast at the popular banquets. The City of London voted him its freedom; Chatham spoke of him with warm admiration, and the Whig party imagined that another Camden had arisen in their ranks. Wedderburn, however, was only working with great shrewdness and more than common effrontery to raise his price, and in January 1771 he concluded a secret negotiation with North by becoming Solicitor-General, justifying himself on the ground that he belonged to the Grenville connection. The Tory party, who in the earlier stages of the Government had given it only a partial and hesitating support,[1] rallied in all their strength around Lord North, while the furious quarrels of the City demagogues divided, weakened, and discredited the popular cause. Though the grievance of the Middlesex election was unredressed, the excitement which had blazed so high in 1768, 1769, and 1770, gradually subsided, and it was followed by a long period of ignoble apathy.

The confidential letters of the leaders of the Opposition are full of complaints of the change that had taken place. 'England at this day,' wrote Chatham in January 1771, 'is no more like Old England or England forty years ago, than the Monsignori of modern Rome are like the Decii, the Gracchi, or the Catos.'[2] 'I do not see,' he afterwards wrote, 'that the smallest good

---

[1] See a remarkable passage in one of Dr. Johnson's pamphlets in favour of the Government. 'Every honest man must lament that it [the Government] has been regarded with fixed neutrality by the Tories, who, being long accustomed to signalise their principles by opposition to the Court, do not yet consider that they have at last a king who knows not the name of party, and who wishes to be the common father of all his people.' —*The False Alarm.*

[2] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 83.

can result to the public from my coming up to the meeting of Parliament. A headlong, self-willed spirit has sunk the City into nothing. . . . The narrow genius of old-corps connection has weakened the Whigs, and rendered national union on revolution principles impossible.'[1] 'The public has slept quietly upon the violation of electors' rights and the tyranny of the House of Commons.'[2] '*Fuit Ilium!* the whole constitution is a shadow.'[3] 'After a violent ferment in the nation,' wrote Burke, 'as remarkable a deadness and vapidity has succeeded.' 'The people have fallen into a total indifference to any matters of public concern. I do not suppose that there was ever anything like this stupor in any period of our history.'[4] 'In the present state of things,' wrote Junius in the last letter he addressed to Woodfall, 'if I were to write again, I must be as silly as any of the horned cattle that run mad through the City, or as any of your wise aldermen. I meant the cause and the public. Both are given up. I feel for the honour of this country when I see that there are not ten men in it who will unite and stand together upon any one question. But it is all alike, vile and contemptible.'[5]

Yet the consequences of the struggle that has been recounted were by no means so transient as might be supposed. New questions, new lines of party division, new political forces were called into being, and the condition of the representative body assumed a prominence in English politics which had never before been equalled. At the time of the Revolution the question at issue lay mainly between the Crown and the Parliament, and it was the great effort of Whig statesmen and of the Whig party to check the encroachments of

---

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 187.
[2] Ibid. p. 204.
[3] Ibid. p. 259.
[4] *Burke's Correspondence*, i. 256, 346.
[5] Woodfall's *Junius*, i 255.

prerogative and to strengthen the popular branch of the Legislature. It was not yet foreseen that Parliament could itself become the oppressor of the people, and that in and through the representative body the Crown could regain a great part of the power which it had lost. 'The power of the Crown,' wrote the great Whig statesman in 1770, 'almost dead and rotten as prerogative, has grown up anew, with much more strength and far less odium, under the name of influence. An influence which operated without noise and without violence, an influence which converted the very antagonist into the instrument of power; which contained in itself a perpetual principle of growth and renovation, and which the distresses and the prosperity of the country equally tended to augment, was an admirable substitute for a prerogative that, being only the offspring of antiquated prejudice, had moulded in its original stamina irresistible principles of decay and dissolution.'[1] We have seen the alarming extent to which parliamentary corruption rose under the first two Georges, but the Whig Government usually succeeded so well in avoiding collisions with public opinion that the outbursts against it were rare, transient, and feeble. The most formidable was at the close of the ministry of Walpole; but the evil, though for a time seriously diminished by the legislation of 1743, soon displayed a renewed vigour. It was aggravated by the growing wealth of the country, which made the struggle for seats more keen; by the disorganised and fluctuating condition of parties, which in many constituencies disturbed and unsettled the balance of political power; by the appearance of the Court in the field as a new and active competitor for parliamentary interest. The enormous corruption employed to carry the Peace of Paris, the

[1] Burke's *Thoughts on the present Discontents.*

new system of issuing Government loans at extravagant terms and distributing the shares among partisans of the Government, the profligate multiplication of Court places, all stimulated the evil. It appeared by the list in the 'Court Calendar,' that in 1770, 192 members of the House of Commons held places under the Government, and it was stated that the number of places had doubled since 1740.[1] Another very important source of corruption arose from the great increase of the National Debt resulting from the war. The excise and customs revenue had risen to about six millions sterling, and the numerous officials who were employed to collect it were, for the most part, docile servants of the Government. In 1782 Lord Rockingham declared that as many as 11,500 revenue officers were employed, and that no less than 70 elections were controlled by their votes.[2]

In the first decade of George III. also, the nabobs, or Indian adventurers, who had returned in great numbers laden with the spoils of Hindostan, began to appear prominently in English political life. At the end of 1767, Chesterfield being desirous of bringing his son into Parliament at the approaching election, offered a borough-jobber 2,500*l.* for a secure seat, but was told 'that there was no such thing as a borough to be had now, for that the rich East and West Indians had secured them all at the rate of 3,000*l.* at least, but many at 4,000*l.*, and two or three that he knew at 5,000*l.*'[3] 'For some years past,' said Chatham, in one of his speeches in 1770, 'there has been an influx of wealth into this country which has been attended with many fatal consequences, because it has not been the regular, natural produce of labour and industry. The riches of Asia have been poured in upon us, and have

[1] *Annual Register*, 1770, p. 72.
[2] *Parl. Hist.* xxiii. 101.
[3] Chesterfield's *Letters to his Son*, December 19, 1767.

brought with them not only Asiatic luxury, but, I fear, Asiatic principles of government. Without connections, without any natural interest in the soil, the importers of foreign gold have forced their way into Parliament by such a torrent of private corruption as no private hereditary fortune could resist.'[1] It was very natural that a class of men who were for the most part utterly ignorant of English politics and indifferent to English liberty, whose habits of thought had been formed in scenes of unbridled violence and despotism, and who had obtained their seats for purely personal ends and by the most lavish corruption, should have been ready to support every attempt to encroach upon the Constitution. They usually attached themselves to the King's friends. Clive himself at one time brought no less than five members into Parliament, and we find him, in 1767, bargaining for an English peerage as the reward of his services against Wilkes.[2] The sums that were lavished in parliamentary contests at this time had probably never before been equalled. In spite of the scandalous spoliation of the Duke of Portland by Sir James Lowther, Portland succeeded in wresting Westmoreland and Cumberland from Lowther in the elections of 1768, but each party is said to have expended 40,000*l.* in the contests.[3] The contest for the town of Northampton at the same election cost each party at least 30,000*l.*[4] 'The immense wealth,' said Walpole, 'that had flowed into the country from the war and the East Indies bore down all barriers of economy, and introduced a luxury of expense unknown to empires of vaster extent.'[5]

---

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 405.

[2] *Grenville Papers*, iv. 14. Walpole's *George III.* i. 330.

[3] Walpole's *George III.* iii. 197.

[4] Chesterfield's *Letters to his Son*, April 12, 1768.

[5] Walpole's *Memoirs of George III.* iii. 198.

There were some cases of corruption so flagrant that Parliament was obliged to take notice of them. In 1761, the borough of Sudbury openly advertised itself for sale.[1] At the next election the magistrates of the city of Oxford wrote a formal letter to their late representatives offering to secure their re-election on condition of their paying the Corporation debt. The offending magistrates were summoned before the House, reprimanded for their conduct, and confined for five days in Newgate, but the House refused to authorise their prosecution, and they are said to have completed their bargain with their members during the short period of their detention.[2] A few borough-brokers whose too open proceedings had been brought under the unwilling notice of Parliament after the election of 1768, were thrown for a short time into Newgate;[3] and Judge Willes, in trying an aggravated case of bribery by the mayor of a Cornish borough, took occasion to say that 'the crime had got to such a pitch that it threatened the utter ruin of the nation.'[4] At Shoreham it was discovered that the majority of the freemen had formed themselves into a permanent society called the 'Christian Club,' for the purpose of selling the seat to the highest bidder, and of monopolising the purchase-money to the prejudice of the other electors. After long discussions eighty-one of the offending freemen were disfranchised, and an important precedent was created by a measure extending the right of voting for members of that borough to all 40*s.* freeholders in the adjoining rape of Bramber.[5]

The constitution of the House of Commons was,

[1] Walpole's *Memoirs of George III.* i. 42.

[2] *Parl. Hist.* xvi. 397–402. Walpole's *George III.* iii. 153, 154.

[3] Walpole's *George III.* iii. 157.

[4] *Annual Register*, 1769, p. 93.

[5] *Annual Register*, 1771, pp. 54, 56. *Adolphus*, i. 479.

indeed, such that even if there had not been systematic corruption in the constituencies and among the members, it would have had but little claim to be regarded as a true representative of the nation. In a book published in 1774 it was shown by very careful computations that out of the 513 members who sat for England and Wales, as many as 254 represented less than 11,500 voters, and as many as 56 about 700 voters. Of these 56 members no one had a constituency of 38 electors, and 6 had constituencies of not more than 3. The county of Middlesex, including London and Westminster, returned only 8 members, while Cornwall returned 44.[1] And yet, taken as a whole, the representation of England and Wales was far more real and more independent than that of Scotland.[2] As long as the House of Commons abstained from violently opposing the popular wishes these anomalies were acquiesced in; but the Middlesex election for the first time brought it into open opposition to public opinion.

The year 1769 is very memorable in political history, for it witnessed the birth of English Radicalism, and the first serious attempts to reform and control Parliament by a pressure from without, making its members habitually subservient to their constituents. Small extra-parliamentary meetings of active politicians, usually members of Parliament, for the purpose of supporting or opposing particular measures or statesmen, were already well known in English public life. The famous meeting at the 'Fountain,' where Pulteney harangued against the policy of Walpole, and the meeting of the followers of Walpole to discuss the propriety of persevering with the Excise Bill, are well-known

[1] De Burgh's *Political Dissertations*, i. 40–48.

[2] On the extraordinary condition of the Scotch representation before the Reform Bill of 1832, see May's *Constitutional History*, i. 301–304.

examples. In the great agitations of 1641 and 1642 there had been many instances of great assemblies for the purpose of subscribing or presenting petitions to the King or to the Parliament,[1] and a movement of the same kind was created in opposition to the Excise Bill of Walpole.[2] But it was only in the agitation of 1769 and 1770 that open, popular meetings, for the purpose of giving expression to public opinion on great political questions became a normal and important element in English public life.[3] The innovation rapidly spread. At one meeting which was held in Westminster Hall in the August of 1769, 7,000 persons are said to have been present;[4] and there were soon few counties in which large bodies of freeholders did not assemble to protest against the conduct of the Parliament, to draw up instructions for their members, or to petition the King for redress of grievances. A multitude of small political societies, under the guidance of local politicians, were accustomed to meet at different taverns in the City; but they were soon absorbed or eclipsed by a great democratic association called the Society of the Supporters of the Bill of Rights, which was founded in 1769 for the purpose of assisting Wilkes in his struggle with the Court, and of advocating political changes of the most drastic character.

The man who appears to have contributed most largely to its formation was Horne, the Vicar of Brentford, afterwards better known as Horne Tooke, who had now thrown aside the clerical profession, for which he was utterly unsuited, and flung himself unreservedly into political agitation. The great contributions to

---

[1] See Clarendon's *History*, i. 403, 404, 412, 413; iii. 61. Tindal's *History*, iv. 219. Cooke's *Hist. of Party*, iii. 187. May's *Constitutional History*, ii. 121. Buckle's *Hist. of Civilisation*, i. 394, 395.

[2] *Annual Register*, 1769, pp. 125, 126.

grammar and the science of language which have given him a permanent place in English literature belong to a later period of his life, and at this time he was known chiefly as one of the most violent agitators among the City politicians. He possessed some literary and still greater forensic ability, and was a man of undoubted energy, courage, honesty, and independence, but at the same time turbulent, vain, and quarrelsome, and very unscrupulous about the means he employed. In the cause which was raised by the Middlesex election, he once said that he was prepared to dye his black coat red; and he was very active in canvassing, organising public meetings, writing libels, and endeavouring to hunt to death those unfortunate men who were accused of having committed murder in the riots that grew out of the election. Wilkes himself, and also Glynn, Sawbridge, Oliver, and Townshend, who represented the City party in Parliament, were among the original members of the society, and a long series of tests were prepared to be offered to candidates at elections. Every candidate was required to aim at a full and equal representation of the people in Parliament, annual Parliaments, the exclusion from the House of Commons of every member who accepted any place, pension, contract, lottery ticket, or other form of emolument from the Crown; the exaction of an oath against bribery; the impeachment of the Ministers who had violated the rights of the Middlesex freeholders, and instigated the 'massacre' of St. George's Fields; the redress of the grievances of Ireland, and the restoration of the sole right of self-taxation to America. Horne, and a large section of the more respectable members, soon after retired from the society in consequence of the quarrel between Wilkes and Horne; but the seceders formed a new and very similar club, called the 'Constitutional Society,' which was the parent of many later societies,

such as the 'Whig Club,' the 'Friends of the People,' and the 'London Corresponding Society.'[1]

It was a leading doctrine of the new party that a member of Parliament should be simply a delegate, who must regulate his political career entirely according to the wishes of his constituents. In a great meeting which was held in February 1769, Beckford declared that if he received instructions from his constituents directing him to take a course opposed to his convictions, he would consider himself bound to do so, and 'would not oppose his judgment to that of 6,000 of his fellow-citizens.' The habit of sending instructions from constituencies to members was warmly encouraged, and in the course of 1769 it had become common. The Radical party, however, was very weak in Parliament and not strong in the country. It included a few speculative republicans, the most prominent of whom were Mrs. Macaulay, the historian, who was sister to Alderman Sawbridge, and a wealthy and very excellent private gentleman named Hollis, whose passion for printing and collecting magnificent editions of English seventeenth-century works in defence of liberty made him well known to students, and whose donations may be traced in several foreign libraries.[2]

One of the results of this movement was, that the Whigs were compelled, though slowly and timidly, to identify themselves with the question of parliamentary reform. Hitherto the question had not been fully appropriated by either party, and it was by no means clear to which party its advocacy would ultimately fall. The Whigs represented especially the mobile and pro-

[1] Stephen's *Life of Horne Tooke*, i. 163–175. See, too, a remarkable letter of Junius to Wilkes severely criticising the resolutions of the Society of 'the Supporters of the Bill of Rights.'—Woodfall's *Junius*, i. 275–296.

[2] *Annual Register*, 1769, p. 73. Walpole's *George III.* iii. 331.

gressive classes in the community; and as they owed their origin to a great struggle for political liberty, they were the natural guardians of the popular element in the Constitution. But, on the other hand, for half a century after the accession of the House of Brunswick, they kept the Revolution Settlement intact mainly by a parliamentary majority derived from Whig nomination boroughs at a time when the popular sentiment was usually sullen, hostile, or indifferent. During all that time they were the party of the Government, and had therefore the conservative instincts which power naturally produces, and they included the commercial classes, who were much more disposed and tempted to bribe than the country gentry. The Tories, as we have seen, were long the habitual advocates of short parliaments, place Bills, and pension Bills; and one of the strongest sentiments of the country gentry was dislike to that corruption by which merchants, and at a later period Indian nabobs, so often succeeded in defeating them among their tenants. This appears very clearly in the writings of Bolingbroke. 'As to Parliaments,' wrote Swift to Pope in 1721, 'I adored the wisdom of that Gothic institution which made them annual; and I was confident our liberty could never be placed upon a firm foundation until that ancient law were restored among us. For who sees not that while such assemblies are permitted to have a longer duration, there groweth up a commerce of corruption between the ministry and the deputies . . . which traffic would neither answer the design nor expense if Parliaments met once a year.' Among the posthumous works of Swift, there is a short but very remarkable 'Essay on Public Absurdities,' in which that great Tory writer enumerated what he deemed the chief political evils of his time. It is imbued with the strongest prejudices of his party. He speaks of the folly of giving votes to any who did not

belong to the established religion of the country. He condemns absolutely standing armies. He deplores that persons without landed property could by means of the boroughs obtain an entrance into Parliament. But side by side with these views we find him blaming the custom of throwing the expense of an election upon a candidate, the custom of making forty-shilling freeholders in order to give votes to landlords, and the immunity of members and their servants from civil suits. 'It is likewise,' he adds, 'absurd that boroughs decayed are not absolutely extinguished because the returned members do in reality represent nobody at all; and that several large towns are not represented though full of industrious townsmen.'[1]

But the hopes of reform which had been raised on the accession of George III. soon proved vain; corruption under a Tory Ministry advanced in new forms and with an accelerated rapidity, and it was no longer the Court but the people who looked with jealousy on the House of Commons, and desired to limit its authority. The changed attitude of parties was remarkably shown when Chatham, in 1770, brought the Middlesex election before the House of Lords. A motion was introduced by Lord Marchmont, and warmly supported by Lord Mansfield, and by the whole party which was the especial exponent of the views of the Court, deprecating any interference of the House of Lords with that great constitutional question, on the ground that a resolution 'directly or indirectly impeaching a judgment of the House of Commons in a matter wherein their jurisdiction is competent, final, and conclusive, would be a violation of the constitutional rights of the Commons, tends to make a breach between the two Houses of Parliament, and leads to a general confusion.' It was left

[1] Scott's *Swift*, x. 362–366.

for the Whigs to maintain the limitations which the Constitution imposed upon the Commons, and above all, to vindicate the rights of the people to a fuller representation within it.

The attitude of the Whigs towards the question of parliamentary reform differed widely from that of the new Radical party. In order to understand it, we must discriminate carefully between the policy of Chatham and that of the followers of Rockingham. The great service of Chatham to the cause is that he was the first statesman who openly maintained the necessity of an extended system of reform, and who brought in a definite plan for accomplishing this end. He never proposed any lowering of the parliamentary suffrage, and he had no sympathy with the doctrine of personal representation which was implied in the resolutions of the Society of the Supporters of the Bill of Rights, and which, a few years later, was clearly formulated by Stanhope, Cartwright, and Jebb. 'The share of the national burdens,' he once said, 'which any part of the kingdom bears, is the only rule by which we can judge of the weight that it ought to have in the political balance.'[1] In a very remarkable speech, delivered in January 1770, he stated clearly the principles that governed him. 'The Constitution,' he said, 'intended that there should be a permanent relation between the constituent and representative body of the people. Will any man affirm that, as the House of Commons is

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 169. According to Lord Charlemont, Chatham, in one of his speeches on the Stamp Act in 1766, said, 'If England were not properly represented, the representation ought to be amended. The safe advice of Machiavel must one day be pursued, and the Constitution brought back to its first principles. People, however, are apt to mistake the nature of representation, which is not of person but of property, and in this light there is scarcely a blade of grass which is not represented.' —*Original Letters to Henry Flood*, pp. 14, 15.

now formed, that relation is in any degree preserved? It is not preserved, but destroyed. Let us be cautious, however, how we have recourse to violent expedients.' The representation of the counties and of the great cities and trading towns, he maintained, was still real and independent, but the small boroughs were 'the rotten parts of the Constitution.' These rotten parts, however, he deemed it not possible or not prudent to destroy. 'The limb is mortified, but the amputation might be death.'[1] 'Let us try then,' he continued, 'whether some gentler remedies may not be discovered. Since we cannot cure the disorder, let us endeavour to infuse such a portion of new health into the Constitution as may enable it to support its more inveterate diseases.' This might be done by giving one more member to every county. In this way, the amount of honesty and public spirit in the House would be largely increased; the influence of the mercenary boroughs would be diminished, and the change would be effected in complete accordance with the true spirit of the Constitution for 'the knights of the shire approach nearest to the constitutional representation of the country, because they represent the soil.'[2]

On the subject of shortening the duration of parliaments, Chatham had much hesitation. The cry for annual parliaments in a great degree disappeared among the more moderate members of the Radical party, and triennial parliaments, which had existed for some time after the Revolution, became their object. In 1770, however, when the City of London addressed Chatham on the subject, he distinctly repudiated the

[1] In another speech, if rightly reported, he spoke with more hesitation of 'the corrupt and venal boroughs which perhaps could not be lopped off entirely without the hazard of a public convulsion.'—*Chatham Corresp.* iii. 457.

[2] Ibid. pp. 406, 407.

notion that triennial parliaments would prove an efficient remedy for the evils of the State.[1] As late as April 1771, he wrote to Shelburne that he had been endeavouring to collect opinions on the question, and found that there was a very real dislike to any proposal for shortening the duration of Parliament. 'The dread of the more frequent returns of corruption, together with every dissoluteness, which elections spread through the country, strongly indisposes families of all descriptions to such an alteration. As I am persuaded that this opinion is genuine, and very widely extended, I should think it totally unadvisable for me to stir it.' 'As to additional knights of the shire,' he added, 'I collect little encouragement. At best, the thing in theory is not quite disapproved, but the execution not much desired by any; probably arising from the present conduct of representatives of counties, not the most enlightened or spirited part of the House.'[2] Very soon, however, the manifest impossibility of inducing the existing Parliament to yield to the wishes of the nation on the question of the Middlesex election changed the opinion of Chatham, and on May 1, 1771, he announced his conversion to short parliaments. 'The influence of the Crown is become so enormous that some stronger bulwark must be erected for the defence of the Constitution. The Act for constituting septennial parliaments must be repealed. Formerly the inconveniences attaching to short parliaments had great weight with me, but now we are not debating upon a question of convenience. Our all is at stake. Our whole Constitution is giving way, and therefore, with the most deliberate and solemn conviction, I declare myself a convert to triennial parliaments.'[3] The necessity for

---

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 464.

[2] Ibid. iv. 156, 157.

[3] Ibid. iv. 174.

some serious change in the constitution of Parliament he strongly felt. He urged Lord Rockingham in 1770 to aim at the strengthening of the democratic part of the Constitution,[1] and he once predicted to Lord Buchan that before the end of the century either the Parliament would reform itself from within or be reformed with a vengeance from without.

These views cannot be regarded as exaggerated, but they were less timid than those of the Rockingham section of the Whigs. The views of this party were chiefly defended by, and may, I believe, be very largely attributed to, a great man who had now appeared among them, and whose writings, even to the present day, have coloured all that is best in English political thinking.

There is no political figure of the eighteenth century which retains so enduring an interest, or which repays so amply a careful study, as Edmund Burke. All other statesmen seem to belong wholly to the past; for though many of their achievements remain, the profound changes that have taken place in the conditions of English political life have destroyed the significance of their policy and their example. A few fine flashes of rhetoric, a few happy epigrams, a few laboured speeches which now seem cold, lifeless, and commonplace, are all that remain of the eloquence of the Pitts, of Fox, of Sheridan, or of Plunket. But of Burke it may be truly said, that there is scarcely any serious political thinker in England who has not learnt much from his writings, and whom he has not profoundly influenced either in the way of attraction or in the way of repulsion. As an orator, he has been surpassed by some, as a practical politician he has been surpassed by many, and his judgments of men and things were often deflected by

[1] Walpole's *George III.* iv. 57, 58.

violent passions, by strong antipathies, by party spirit, by exaggerated sensibility, by a strength of imagination and of affection, which continually invested particular objects with a halo of superstitious reverence. But no other politician or writer has thrown the light of so penetrating a genius on the nature and working of the British Constitution, has impressed his principles so deeply on both of the great parties in the State, and has left behind him a richer treasure of political wisdom applicable to all countries and to all times. He had a peculiar gift of introducing into transient party conflicts observations drawn from the most profound knowledge of human nature, of the first principles of government and legislation, and of the more subtle and remote consequences of political institutions, and there is perhaps no English prose writer since Bacon whose works are so thickly starred with thought. The time may come when they will be no longer read. The time will never come in which men would not grow the wiser by reading them.

He is one of the very few instances of a conspicuous statesman who took no part in English politics till he had attained the mature age of thirty-six. The second son of an Irish attorney, who was for some time at the head of his profession in Dublin, and of a Catholic lady of good family, he had received an excellent education in a Quaker school at Ballitore, in the county of Kildare, and passed from thence to Dublin University, where he soon after obtained a scholarship, and where he appears to have found an amount of intellectual activity considerably greater than that which Gibbon a few years later found at Oxford.[1] Burke had, however, little or no college ambition. His favourite studies lay outside

[1] See Burke's correspondence with Richard Shackleton, the son of his schoolmaster, in that singularly charming book, the *Leadbeater Papers*, written by the daughter of Richard Shackleton.

the regular course; and although he brought from the University a singularly wide, accurate, and intelligent knowledge of the ideas and sentiments of the classical writers, and of the laws and conditions of ancient societies, he never attained, or perhaps aspired to, that fastidious delicacy and polish of scholarship which is the pride of the great English schools. He spoke and wrote much for a college debating society. He assiduously attended the great college library, and he there laid the foundation of that vast and multifarious knowledge which distinguished him from all the statesmen of his time. Had his intellect been less powerful and comprehensive, had his capacity for assimilating knowledge been less extraordinary, the immense variety of his tastes and pursuits would have infallibly dissipated his energies and destroyed that power of concentration without which no great thing can be done, and it is curious to observe how long his mind vibrated doubtfully between different careers. He was called to the Bar, but he disliked the profession and never practised, though he acquired a knowledge of the principles of jurisprudence which has obtained the admiration of great lawyers. He was probably an unsuccessful candidate for the Chair of Logic at Glasgow University.[1] He thought, at one time, under the pressure of straitened circumstances, of emigrating to the American colonies. In 1756 he emerged into notice by his admirable imitation of Bolingbroke, and in the same year he published his well-known treatise on the 'Sublime and Beautiful,' which appeared in a greatly enlarged form in the following year. This class of studies, which Hutcheson had recently made very popular, had always a great fascination to his mind, and it was united in Burke with a delicacy of taste in his judgment of art which

[1] There is some controversy on this point. See Prior's *Life of Burke*, i. 44, 45.

was warmly recognised by both Reynolds and Barry. History, at the same time, occupied a large share of his attention. He began, but never finished, a work on early English history. He wrote wholly or in part an anonymous 'Account of the European Settlements in America,' and the historical sketches of the 'Annual Register,' which was founded in 1758, were, for many years, from his pen. His writings are full of admirable examples of that highest kind of historical insight which illuminates the present by the experience of the past, and detects and discriminates amid the great multitude of indifferent facts the true causes and principles of national greatness or decay. In 1759 we find him applying for a consulship at Madrid,[1] and he was afterwards, for a short time, private secretary to Gerard Hamilton, by whose favour he obtained an Irish pension of 300*l.* He soon, however, disagreed with Hamilton, threw up his pension at the end of a year, and resumed his old life, writing much for the booksellers, haunting the gallery of the House of Commons, and mixing largely with the best literary and artistic society of his time.

There are few men whose depth and versatility have been both so fully recognised by their contemporaries, and whose pre-eminence in many widely different spheres is so amply attested. Adam Smith declared that he had found no other man who, without communication, had thought out the same conclusions on political economy as himself. Winstanley, the Camden Professor of Ancient History, bore witness to his great knowledge of the 'philosophy, history, and filiation of languages, and of the principles of etymological deduction.' Arthur Young, the first living authority on agriculture, acknowledged his obligations to him for much information about his special pursuits, and it was in a great degree his

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, i. 430–433.

passion for agriculture which induced Burke, when the death of his elder brother had improved his circumstances, to encumber himself with a heavy debt by purchasing that Beaconsfield estate where some of his happiest days were spent.[1] His conversational powers were only equalled, and probably not surpassed, by those of Johnson. Goldsmith described him as 'winding into his subject, like a serpent.' 'Like the fabled object of the fairy's favours,' said Wilberforce, 'whenever he opened his mouth pearls and diamonds dropped from him.' Grattan pronounced him the best talker he had ever known. Johnson, in spite of their violent political differences, always spoke of him with generous admiration. 'Burke is an extraordinary man. His stream of mind is perpetual.' 'His talk is the ebullition of his mind. He does not talk for a desire of distinction, but because his mind is full.' 'He is the only man whose common conversation corresponds with the general fame which he has in the world. Take up what topic you please, he is ready to meet you.' 'No man of sense could meet Mr. Burke by accident under a gateway to avoid a shower without being convinced that

[1] No less than 14,000*l.* (out of 20,000*l.* required to buy the estate) was raised on a mortgage which was still outstanding when the estate was sold in 1812. Sir Joseph Napier has investigated with great care the circumstances relating to the Beaconsfield estate and to a small property at Clogher, which was also in the Burke family, in a lecture on Edmund Burke delivered in Dublin in 1862 (Napier's *Lectures and Essays*, pp. 109–211). This lecture contains several particulars about Burke's private life which will not be found elsewhere, and a very complete answer to some obscure slanders on the subject which had been exhumed and elaborated by the late Mr. Dilke, and which have since been reprinted. It was natural that in an age of unsparing calumny a high-minded and very sensitive public man should have endeavoured as much as possible to withdraw his private concerns and domestic relations from the public gaze. It was equally natural that a critic of the stamp of Mr. Dilke should regard such a reticence as profoundly suspicious, and should make it the endless theme of dishonourable insinuations.

he was the first man in England.' It is not surprising that 'he is the first man in the House of Commons, for he is the first man everywhere.' He once declared that 'he knew but two men who had risen considerably above the common standard—Lord Chatham and Edmund Burke.'[1]

The admirable proportion which subsisted between his different powers, both moral and intellectual, is especially remarkable. Genius is often, like the pearl, the offspring or the accompaniment of disease, and an extraordinary development of one class of faculties is too frequently balanced by an extraordinary deficiency of others. But nothing of this kind can be found in Burke. His intellectual energy was fully commensurate with his knowledge, and he had rare powers of bringing illustrations and methods of reasoning derived from many spheres to bear on any subject he touched, and of combining an extraordinary natural facility with the most untiring and fastidious labour. In debate, images, illustrations, and arguments rose to his lips with a spontaneous redundance that astonished his hearers;[2] but no writer elaborated his compositions more carefully, and his printers were often aghast at

[1] See the different testimonies on the subject collected in Prior and Macknight's Lives of Burke, and also the masterly sketch in Buckle's *Hist. of Civilisation*, i. 414–423. Charles Butler says that 'Burke's conversation was rambling, but splendid, rich and instructive beyond comparison.'—Butler's *Reminiscences*, i. 168. Some interesting fragments which were reported by Mrs. Crewe have been printed by Lord Houghton in the *Philobiblion Society* and in Rogers' *Recollections*.

[2] Sir Gilbert Elliot, after a very interesting description of the eloquence of Sheridan, says, 'Burke also abounds with these fine passages, and he soars also as much out of the lower regions of discourse and infinitely further into those of imagination and fancy; but no man could ever perceive in him the least trace of preparation, and he never appears more incontestably inspired by the moment and transported with the fury of the god within him than in those finished passages which it would cost Shake-

the multitude of his corrections and alterations. Nor did his intellectual powers in any degree dry up or dwarf his moral nature. There is no public man whose character is more clearly reflected in his life and in his intimate correspondence; and it may be confidently said that there is no other public man whose character was in all essential respects more transparently pure. Weak health, deep and fervent religious principles, and studious habits, saved him from the temptations of youth; and amid all the vicissitudes and corruption of politics his heart never lost its warmth, or his conscience its sensitiveness. There were faults indeed which were only too apparent in his character as in his intellect—an excessive violence and irritability of temper; personal antipathies, which were sometimes carried beyond all the bounds of reason; party spirit, which was too often suffered to obscure his judgment, and to hurry him into great intemperance and exaggeration of language. But he was emphatically a good man; and in the higher moral qualities of public as of private life, he has not often been surpassed. That loyal affection with which he clung through his whole life to the friends of his early youth; that genuine kindness which made him, when still a poor man, the munificent patron of Barry and Crabbe, and which showed itself in innumerable acts of unobtrusive benevolence; that stainless

speare long study and labour to produce.'—Lady Minto's *Life of Sir G. Elliot*, i. 215. Walpole, on the other hand, while speaking of the 'inexhaustible fertility' with which Burke 'poured out new ideas, metaphors, and allusions which came forth ready dressed in the most ornamental and yet the most correct language,' complained that even when he 'replied extempore, his very answers, that sprang from what had been said by others, were so painted and artfully arranged, that they wore the appearance of study and preparation.'—Walpole's *George III.* ii. 273, 275. Gibbon bears witness to the correctness of those printed speeches which he had himself heard delivered.—*Miscellaneous Works*, i. 235.

purity and retiring modesty of nature which made his domestic life so different from that of some of the greatest of his contemporaries; that depth of feeling which made the loss of his only son the death-knell of the whole happiness of his life, may be traced in every stage of his public career. 'I know the map of England,' he once said, 'as well as the noble lord, or as any other person, and I know that the way I take is not the road to preferment.' Fidelity to his engagements, a disinterested pursuit of what he believed to be right, in spite of all the allurements of interest and of popularity; a deep and ardent hatred of oppression and cruelty in every form; a readiness at all times to sacrifice personal pretensions to party interests; a capacity of devoting long years of thankless labour to the service of those whom he had never seen, and who could never reward him, were the great characteristics of his life, and they may well make us pardon many faults of temper, judgment, and taste.

It was in July 1765 that Lord Rockingham, having just become Prime Minister, made Burke his private secretary, and almost immediately afterwards by the influence of Lord Verney he was returned to Parliament for the small borough of Wendover. From this time he became one of the warmest friends and most intimate counsellors of Rockingham, and the chief defender of his policy, both in Parliament and in the press. In Parliament he had great obstacles to contend with. An Irishman unconnected with any of the great governing families, and without any of the influence derived from property and rank, he entered Parliament late in life and with habits fully formed, and during the greater part of his career he spoke as a member of a small minority in opposition to the strong feeling of the House. He was too old and too rigid to catch its tone, and he never acquired that subtle instinct or tact which enables

some speakers to follow its fleeting moods and to strike with unfailing accuracy the precise key which is most in harmony with its prevailing temper. 'Of all politicians of talent I ever knew,' wrote Horace Walpole, 'Burke has least political art,' and his defects so increased with age that the time came when he was often listened to with undisguised impatience. He spoke too often, too vehemently, and much too long; and his eloquence, though in the highest degree intellectual, powerful, various, and original, was not well adapted to a popular audience.[1] He had little or nothing of that fire and majesty of declamation with which Chatham thrilled his hearers, and often almost overawed opposition, and as a parliamentary debater he was far inferior to Charles Fox. That great master of persuasive reasoning never failed to make every sentence tell upon his hearers, to employ precisely and invariably the kind of arguments that were most level with their understandings, to subordinate every other consideration to the single end of convincing and impressing those who were before him. Burke was not inferior to Fox in readiness and in the power of clear and cogent reasoning. His wit, though not of the highest order,

[1] There is an excellent criticism of the merits and defects of Burke as a speaker in a letter of Flood to Charlemont, describing one of Burke's great speeches on conciliation with America. 'His performance was the best I have heard from him in the whole winter. He is always brilliant to an uncommon degree, and yet I believe it would be better he were less so. I don't mean to join with the cry which will always run against shining parts, when I say that I sincerely think it interrupts him so much in argument that the House are never sensible that he argues as well as he does. Fox gives a strong proof of this, for he makes use of Burke's speech as a repertory, and by stating crabbedly two or three of those ideas which Burke has buried under flowers, he is thought almost always to have had more argument.'—*Charlemont MSS.* Erskine used to say that the grand fault of Burke's speaking was that he was too episodical.—Prior's *Life of Burke*, ii. 473.

was only equalled by that of Townshend, Sheridan, and perhaps North, and it rarely failed in its effect upon the House. He far surpassed every other speaker in the copiousness and correctness of his diction, in the range of knowledge he brought to bear on every subject of debate, in the richness and variety of his imagination, in the gorgeous beauty of his descriptive passages, in the depth of the philosophical reflections and the felicity of the personal sketches which he delighted in scattering over his speeches. But these gifts were frequently marred by a strange want of judgment, measure, and self-control. His speeches were full of episodes and digressions, of excessive ornamentation and illustration, of dissertations on general principles of politics, which were invaluable in themselves, but very unpalatable to a tired or excited House waiting eagerly for a division. As Grattan once said, 'they were far better suited to a patient reader than an impatient hearer.' Passionately in earnest in the midst of a careless or half-hearted assembly, seeking in all measures their essential and permanent tendencies, while his hearers thought chiefly of their transient and personal aspects, discussing first principles and remote consequences, among men whose minds were concentrated on the struggle of the hour, constantly led away by the endless stream of ideas and images which were for ever surging from his brain, he was often interrupted by his impatient hearers. There is scarcely a perceptible difference between the style of his essays and the style of his published speeches; and if the reader selects from his works the few passages which possess to an eminent degree the flash and movement of spoken rhetoric, he will be quite as likely to find them in the former as in the latter.[1]

[1] See e.g. the magnificent declamatory passage on the justice of the French war in the first letter on the Regicidal Peace.

Like most men of great imaginative power, he possessed a highly strung and over-sensitive nervous organisation, and the incessant conflicts of parliamentary life brought it at last into a condition of irritability that was wholly morbid and abnormal. Though eminently courteous and amenable to reason in private life, in public he was often petulant, intractable, and ungovernably violent. His friends sometimes held him down by the skirts of his coat to restrain the outbursts of his anger. He spoke with a burning brain and with quivering nerves. The rapid, vehement, impetuous torrent of his eloquence, kindling as it flowed, and the nervous motions of his countenance reflected the ungovernable excitement under which he laboured; and while Fox could cast off without an effort the cares of public life and pass at once from Parliament to a night of dissipation at Brooks's, Burke returned from debate jaded, irritated, and soured. With an intellect capable of the very highest efforts of judicial wisdom he combined the passions of the most violent partisan, and in the excitement of debate these too often obtained the ascendency. Few things are more curious than the contrast between the feverish and passionate excitement with which he threw himself into party debates, and the admirably calm, exhaustive, and impartial summaries of the rival arguments which he afterwards drew up for the 'Annual Register.' Though a most skilful and penetrating critic, and though his English style is one of the very finest in the language, his taste was not pure. Even his best writings are sometimes disfigured by strangely coarse and repulsive images, and gross violations of taste appear to have been frequent in his speeches. It is probable that in his case the hasty reports in the 'Parliamentary History' and in the 'Cavendish Debates' are more than commonly defective, for Burke was a very rapid speaker, and his language

had the strongly marked individuality which reporters rarely succeed in conveying;[1] but no one who judged by these reports would place his speeches in the first rank, and some of them are wild and tawdry almost to insanity. Nor does he appear to have possessed any histrionic power. His voice had little charm. He had a strong Irish accent, and Erskine described his delivery as 'execrable,' and declared that in some of his finest speeches he emptied the House.[2]

Gerard Hamilton once said that while everywhere else Burke seemed the first man, in the House of Commons he appeared only the second. At the same time there is ample evidence that with all his defects he was from the first a great power in the House, and that in the early part of his career, and almost always on occasions of great importance, his eloquence had a wonderful power upon his hearers. Pitt passed into the House of Lords almost immediately after Burke had entered the

---

[1] It is related of Coleridge that a very experienced shorthand writer was employed to take down his lectures on Shakespeare, and that his manuscript proved almost unintelligible. The reporter afterwards said that from long experience he had, with every other speaker he had ever heard, been almost always able to guess the form of the latter part of each sentence by the form of the beginning, but that the conclusion of every one of Coleridge's sentences was a surprise to him.

[2] There are excellent descriptions of Burke's speaking in Wraxall's *Memoirs*, ii. 35–38; Walpole's *Memoirs of George III.* ii. 273, 274; *Last Journals*, i. 84, 85, 443; and in the letters in Lady Minto's *Life of Sir G. Elliot*. See, too, Butler's *Reminiscences*, pp. 166–168. Erskine's very unfavourable description of his manner is given in Campbell's *Chancellors*, ix. 68, 69. Lord Brougham, in his sketch of Burke (*Statesmen of George III.*), has collected several instances of his glaring bad taste. Another, too gross for quotation, will be found in Jesse's *Life of Selwyn*, iv. 130, 131. Wilkes said that the Venus of Burke 'was sometimes the Venus of whisky.' 'What will they think,' Sheridan once said, 'of the public speaking of this age in after times when they read Mr. Burke's speeches and are told that in his day he was not accounted either the first or second speaker?'—Rogers's *Recollections*, p. 89.

Commons. Fox was then a boy. Sheridan had not yet become a member; and his fellow-countryman, Barré, though a rhetorician of great if somewhat coarse power, was completely eclipsed by the splendour and the variety of the talents of Burke. Charles Townshend alone, who shone for a few years with a meteoric brilliancy in English politics, was regarded as his worthy rival. Johnson wrote to Langton with great delight that Burke by his first speeches in the House had 'gained more reputation than perhaps any man at his first appearance ever gained before.'[1] 'An Irishman, Mr. Burke, is sprung up,' wrote the American General Lee, who was then watching London politics with great care, 'who has astonished everybody with the power of his eloquence and his comprehensive knowledge in all our exterior and internal politics and commercial interests. He wants nothing but that sort of dignity annexed to rank and property in England to make him the most considerable man in the Lower House.'[2] Grattan, who on a question of oratory was one of the most competent of judges, wrote in 1769, 'Burke is unquestionably the first orator among the Commons of England, boundless in knowledge, instantaneous in his apprehensions, and abundant in his language. He speaks with profound attention and acknowledged superiority, notwithstanding the want of energy, the want of grace, and the want of elegance in his manner.'[3] Horace Walpole, who hated Burke, acknowledged that he was 'versed in every branch of eloquence,' that he possessed 'the quickest conception, amazing facility of elocution, great strength of argumentation, all the power of imagination and memory,' that even his unpremeditated speeches displayed 'a choice and variety of language, a profusion

[1] Boswell's *Johnson* (Croker's ed.), p. 177.

[2] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 111.

[3] Grattan's *Life*, i. 142.

of metaphors, and a correctness of diction that was surprising,' and that in public though not in private life his wit was of the highest order, 'luminous, striking, and abundant.' He complained, however, with good reason that Burke 'often lost himself in a torrent of images and copiousness,' that 'he dealt abundantly too much in establishing general positions,' that he had 'no address or insinuation;' that his speeches often showed a great want of sobriety and judgment, and 'the still greater want of art to touch the passions.'[1]

But though their length, their excursiveness, and their didactic character did undoubtedly on many occasions weary and even empty the House, there were others in which Burke showed a power both of fascinating and of moving such as very few speakers have attained. Gibbon, whose sinecure place was swept away by the Economical Reform Bill of 1782, bears testimony to the 'delight with which that diffusive and ingenious orator, Mr. Burke, was heard by all sides of the House, and even by those whose existence he proscribed.'[2] Walpole has himself repeatedly noticed the effect which the speeches of Burke produced upon the hearers. Describing one of those against the American war, he says that the wit of one part 'excited the warmest and most continued bursts of laughter even from Lord North, Rigby, and the Ministers themselves,' while the pathos of another part 'drew iron tears down Barré's cheek,' and Governor Johnston exclaimed that 'he was now glad that strangers were excluded, as if they had been admitted Burke's speech would have excited them to tear ministers to pieces as they went out of the House.'[3] Sir Gilbert Elliot, describing one of

[1] Walpole's *Last Journals*, i. 84–86, 438, 443, 513; ii. 26.

[2] Gibbon's *Miscellaneous Works*, i. 235.

[3] Walpole's *Last Journals*, ii. 194. Walpole's *Letters*, vii. 29, 30.

Burke's speeches on the Warren Hastings impeachment, says: 'He did not, I believe, leave a dry eye in the whole assembly.'[1] Making every allowance for the enthusiasm of a French Royalist for the author of the 'Reflections on the French Revolution,' the graphic description by the Duke de Levis of one of Burke's latest speeches on that subject is sufficient to show the magnetism of his eloquence even at the end of his career. 'He made the whole House pass in an instant from the tenderest emotions of feeling to bursts of laughter; never was the electric power of eloquence more imperiously felt. This extraordinary man seemed to raise and quell the passions of his auditors with as much ease and as rapidly as a skilful musician passes into the various modulations of his harpsichord. I have witnessed many, too many, political assemblages and striking scenes where eloquence performed a noble part, but the whole of them appear insipid when compared with this amazing effort.'[2]

There are few things, I think, more melancholy in English history than that Chatham and Burke should never have been cordially united. They were incomparably the ablest men then living in English politics. Both of them were men of high honour, of stainless morals, of pure and disinterested patriotism, but though often approaching there was always something that kept them asunder. The conduct of Pitt towards the first Rockingham Ministry, and the opposition of the Rockingham party to the Ministry of Grafton, sowed dissensions between them, and they were profoundly different in their characters and their intellects. Burke, whose leaning was always to the side of caution, and usually to the side of authority, was very deficient in that power of popular sympathy which Chatham so

[1] Lady Minto's *Life of Sir Gilbert Elliot*, i. 195.
[2] Prior's *Burke*, ii. 472.

eminently possessed; and his nature, at once proud, simple, retiring, and sensitive, shrank from the imperious and impracticable arrogance, and from the elaborate and theatrical ostentation of Chatham. In public he sometimes spoke of him with warm eulogy. Even when he censured his policy, as, for example, in his famous and most admirable description of the ill-assorted and heterogeneous character of his second Ministry, his language was studiously deferential and moderate; and on the death of Chatham, Burke was one of the first to pay a generous tribute to his memory, but it is quite evident from his private correspondence, extending over many years, that his admiration for him was largely mixed with dislike.

On almost every important question we find some serious divergence of opinion. On the great question of America, they were agreed in reprobating the Stamp Act and in desiring its repeal; but they differed in principle about the Declaratory Act, and they differed in policy about the commercial restrictions. In October 1766 Grafton, in his own name and in that of Conway, urged upon Chatham the necessity of securing the services of Burke, 'the readiest man upon all points, perhaps, in the whole House.' 'The gentleman you have pointed out as a necessary recruit,' replied Chatham, 'I think a man of parts and an ingenious speaker. As to his notions and maxims of trade they never can be mine.'[1]

On the constitutional questions arising from the Middlesex election both sections of the party were agreed, but the Rockinghams would have been content without a dissolution, and they looked with much more reserve and hesitation than Chatham on the demo-

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 110, 111. Lord Stanhope's *Hist. of England*, v. app. p. x.

cratic agitation which was raised against the Parliament.

On the question of the East India Company they were violently opposed. Chatham desired that the territorial possessions of the Company should be gradually taken under the direct dominion of the Crown; that the immense revenues derived from the treaties of Clive in Bengal should accrue to the national exchequer; and that the Crown should interfere to put an end to the scandalous oppression of the natives. 'India,' he wrote, 'teems with iniquities so rank as to smell to earth and heaven. The reformation of them, if pursued in a pure spirit of justice, might exalt the nation and endear the English name through the world. . . . The putting under circumscription and control the high and dangerous prerogative of war and alliances, so abused in India, I cannot but approve, as it shuts the door against such insatiable rapine and detestable enormities as have on some occasions stained the English name and disgraced human nature.'[1] The subject gave rise to long and intricate discussions in 1766 and the three following years, and considerable restrictions were imposed on the powers of the Company. In 1767 an Act was passed which, among other provisions, restrained it from making a dividend of more than ten per cent., and two years later an Act guaranteed the Company the territorial revenues of India for five years longer on several conditions, the most important being an annual payment of 400,000*l.* to the Imperial exchequer.[2] In 1773 Burgoyne carried resolutions embodying the views of Chatham, that all acquisitions made under the influence of a military force, or by treaty with foreign Powers, do

---

[1] See the *Chatham Correspondence*, especially iii. 61, 199, 200, 216, 269; iv. 276, 277.

[2] 7 George III. c. 57. 9 George III. c. 24.

of right belong to the State, and that to appropriate such acquisitions to private use is illegal; while Lord North carried a Bill restricting and modifying the constitution of the East India Company. It is a remarkable fact, when viewed in the light of his later Indian policy, that Burke was strenuously and even passionately opposed to these proceedings as a violation of the charter of the Company and a spoliation of private individuals. He denied that the Government had any right to territorial revenues acquired by the efforts of a private corporation. He denied that the direct power of the Crown was likely in any way to ameliorate the condition of the natives, and he predicted that if Indian patronage passed into the hands of the Crown it would be 'a beginning of such a scene of frauds, impositions, and Treasury jobbing of all sorts, both here and in India, as would soon destroy all the little honesty and public spirit we have left.'[1]

The next great constitutional question was raised by the doctrine of Mansfield, that in prosecutions for libel the jury must only pronounce on the fact of the publication and the meaning of the innuendos, leaving it to the judge to say whether the document is legally a libel. Both Chatham and Burke agreed in denouncing this doctrine as fatal to the liberty of the press and in desiring its overthrow, but they differed wholly as to the means. The Rockingham party attempted without success to carry an enacting Bill stating in its preamble that doubts had arisen on the subject, and establishing that henceforth the jury should have a right to decide whether the paper submitted to it was a libel. Chatham and his followers, on the other hand, vehemently maintained that Mansfield had been guilty of an infringement

[1] See *Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 254, 255, 283. *Burke's Correspondence*, i. 210, 211, 389, 390. Walpole's *Last Journals*, i. 169, 207, 210, 242–246.

of the law which would justify impeachment, that there was no real doubt upon the question, and that the proper way of dealing with it was by a declaratory law. On both sides the irritation was very great. 'If you yield now,' wrote Burke to Dowdeswell, 'the horseman [Chatham] will stick to you while you live. . . . Not an iota should be yielded of the principle of the Bill, or the principle of the preamble.'[1]

Another grave question which threatened to divide the two sections of the Opposition was the tax upon absentees, which was proposed by the Irish Parliament in 1774, and which caused much agitation among the great Whig nobles who possessed estates in Ireland. Chatham, as we shall hereafter see, contended that if the Irish Parliament voted this tax, no other body should interfere with it, for on a question of Irish taxation it was supreme. Burke and the Rockingham party were prepared to resort to all measures in England to overthrow the decision.[2]

The main differences, however, between Burke and Chatham lay in their methods of remedying the abuses of Parliament and the disorganised condition of parties. We have already seen the measures of Chatham, and the views of Burke on the subject are well deserving of careful study. The magnitude of the evil he fully recognised. 'The distempers of monarchy,' he wrote, 'were the great subjects of apprehension and redress in the last century; in this, the distempers of Parliament.' But according to him, the first condition of improvement was that 'the whole scheme of weak, divided, and dependent administrations' should be changed, and especially that 'the King's men should be utterly destroyed

[1] *Burke's Correspondence*, i. 251. See on the other side *Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 101–104, 109–114.

[2] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 296–307, 318–321. Albemarle's *Life of Rockingham*, ii. 226–234.

as a corps.'[1] His great objects were to build up a party interest independent of Court influence, and sufficiently powerful to decide the course of English politics, to put an end to the system of mere casual and temporary unions of discordant politicians, and to revive a high sense of party discipline. 'Party,' he said in a very striking passage, 'is a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed. For my part I find it impossible to conceive that any one believes in his own politics, or thinks them to be of any weight, who refuses to adopt the means of having them reduced into practice. . . . Every honourable connection will avow it is their first purpose to pursue every just method to put the men who hold their opinions into such a condition as may enable them to carry their common plans into execution with all the power and authority of the State. As this power is attached to certain situations, it is their duty to contend for these situations. Without a proscription of others, they are bound to give to their own party the preference in all things, and by no means for private considerations to accept any offers of power in which the whole body is not included. . . . Men thinking freely will in particular instances think differently. But still as the greater part of the measures which arise in the course of public business are related to, or dependent on, some great leading general principles in government, a man must be peculiarly unfortunate in the choice of his political company if he does not agree with them at least nine times in ten. . . . When the question is in its nature doubtful or not very material, the modesty which becomes an individual, and (in spite of our Court moralists) that partiality which becomes a well-chosen friendship, will

[1] *Burke's Correspondence*, i. 170, 216.

frequently bring on an acquiescence in the general sentiment. Thus the disageeement will naturally be rare; it will be only enough to indulge freedom without violating concord or disturbing arrangements. And this is all that ever was required for a character of the greatest uniformity and steadiness in connection. How men can proceed without any connection at all is to me utterly incomprehensible.'[1]

In consolidating this party organisation few things are more important than the services of great historical families who have from generation to generation attached themselves to the same political party; who supply that party with conspicuous and universally recognised leaders, and with a great weight of connection and borough influence, and who devote their leading members from early life to a political career. Much was said about 'the growth of an aristocratic power prejudicial to the rights of the Crown and the balance of the Constitution.' An oligarchical despotism like that of Venice might indeed be easily conceived, and in the opinion of Burke it was beyond all other despotisms to be detested. 'But,' he added, 'whatever my dislikes may be, my fears are not upon that quarter. The question on the influence of a Court and of a peerage is not which of the two dangers is the most eligible, but which is the most imminent. He is but a poor observer who has not seen that the generality of the peers, far from supporting themselves in a state of independent greatness, are but too apt to fall into an oblivion of their dignity and to run headlong into an abject servitude. . . . These gentlemen, so jealous of aristocracy, make no complaints of those peers (neither few nor inconsiderable), who are always in the train of a court, and whose whole weight must be considered as a por-

[1] *Thoughts on the Cause of the present Discontents.*

tion of the settled influence of the Crown.' It is only when some peers forming a political interest, separate from the Court and set themselves 'against a back-stairs influence and clandestine government,' that the alarm is sounded and the Constitution pronounced in danger of being forced into an aristocracy. All this was but part of the system that was being steadily pursued 'of sowing jealousies amongst the different orders of the State, and of disjointing the natural strength of the kingdom, that it may be rendered incapable of resisting the sinister designs of wicked men who have engrossed the royal power.'[1] The influence of the great families if rightly used is a strong barrier against the undue influence of the Court, and it gives a healthy permanence, unity, and consistency to party organisations. In one

[1] *Thoughts on the Cause of the present Discontents.* Fox in the same spirit, in two very remarkable letters written in 1794, defended the maintenance of party government as 'the only mode or plan in this country by which a rational man can hope to stem the power and influence of the Crown;' and he says, 'I am convinced that this system, and this alone, has prevented Great Britain from falling into what Hume calls its euthanasia of absolute monarchy.'—Lord Russell's *Life of Fox*, iii. 68–72. I may add a few sentences describing the political condition of England in 1772, from a very able anonymous book published in that year. 'No regular party existing, the breath of the day has formed, dissolved, and changed oppositions; no tie or connection being formed among any set of men, they have fallen into the most unnatural unions imaginable. . . . Every set of men, nay almost every man, has been in and out, with or without any other set of men, so that nothing like the principle of a party is left in the nation. This revolution must in the end have great consequences; the present miserable disconnection among all the great men and their dependants in the kingdom has thrown a greater power into the hands of the Crown, than an augmentation in the army of 10,000 men. . . . At present we have in the nation only one set of men that can pretend to the appearance of a party, which are those who adhere to the Court on every question. . . . These men, who are strictly united and under the ministerial banner, having a principle of union wanted by every other set, are an overmatch for all.'—*Letters on the present State of England*, pp. 202–204.

of his letters to the Duke of Richmond, Burke noticed as a fact very applicable to English history that 'there were two eminent families at Rome that for several ages were distinguished uniformly by opposite characters and principles, the Claudian and Valerian,' and that 'any one who looks attentively to their history will see that the balance of that famous constitution was kept up for some ages by the politics of certain families as much as by anything in the laws and orders of the State.' 'I do not look upon your time or lives as lost,' he added, 'if in this sliding away from the genuine spirit of the country, certain parties if possible, if not the heads of certain families, should make it their business by the whole course of their lives, principally by their example, to mould into the very vital stamina of their descendants those principles which ought to be transmitted pure and unmixed to posterity.'[1]

To a statesman of these views it is obvious that the career of Chatham must have been extremely obnoxious. His avowed design of breaking up parties, his incapacity of acting steadily with any connection, his preference for ministries formed out of isolated politicians detached from different connections, the extreme and obsequious reverence he repeatedly showed for the Sovereign, his manifest wish in at least one period of his life to employ the political influence of the Court to destroy the cohesion of aristocratic factions, were all in the highest degree offensive to Burke. The maxim 'not men but measures,' which was current among the followers of Chatham, he described as a kind of charm by which many politicians were enabled 'to get loose from every honourable engagement,'[2] and in more than one passage of splendid eloquence he painted the anarchy into which

---

[1] *Burke's Correspondence*, i. 382, 383.

[2] *Thoughts on the Cause of the present Discontents.*

the ministry of Chatham had fallen on account of the political method employed by its creator.[1] But it is only in his private correspondence that the extent of his dislike becomes fully apparent. 'The Court,' he wrote to Lord Rockingham in 1769, 'alone can profit by any movements of Lord Chatham, and he is always their resource when they are run hard.' 'By sending for Lord Chatham,' the King's friends can 'mean nothing else than to patch a shred or two of one or more of the other parties upon the old Bute garment, since their last piecing is worn out. If they had been dissatisfied with the last botching of Lord Chatham, they would not have thought again of the same workman.' 'The style of Lord Chatham's politics is to keep hovering in air over all parties and to souse down where the prey may prove best.' 'The character of their party [that of Chatham] is to be very ready to plunge into difficult business—ours is to go through with it.' The Tory Ministry of North, he wrote in 1774, 'has three great securities—the actual possession of power, chapter of accidents, and the Earl of Chatham. This last is the *sacra anchora*.' 'Lord Chatham,' he wrote to Rockingham in the same year, 'shows a disposition to come near you, but with those reserves which he never fails to

[1] See e.g. that noble passage in his speech on American taxation. 'If ever Lord Chatham fell into a fit of the gout, or if any other cause withdrew him from public cares, principles directly the contrary to his own were sure to predominate. . . . When his face was hid but for a moment, his whole system was on a wide sea without chart or compass. . . . Deprived of his guiding influence his colleagues were whirled about, the sport of every gust and easily driven into any port; and as those who joined with them in manning the vessel were the most directly opposite to his opinions, measures and character, and far the most artful and most powerful of the set, they easily prevailed so as to seize upon the vacant, unoccupied, and derelict minds of his friends, and instantly they turned the vessel wholly out of the course of his policy.'

have as long as he thinks that the closet-door stands ajar to receive him. The least peep into that closet intoxicates him, and will to the end of his life.' 'Lord Chatham is, in a manner, out of the question, and the Court have lost in him a sure instrument of division in every public contest.' 'Acquainted as I am with the astonishing changes of Lord Chatham's constitution (whether natural or political), I am surprised to find that he is again perfectly recovered. But so it is. He will probably play more tricks.' 'Lord Chatham's coming out is always a critical thing to your lordship.'[1]

In a letter written after the death of Chatham by Burke to his old schoolmaster, Shackleton, with whom he was accustomed to keep up an exceedingly intimate, affectionate, and unreserved correspondence, there is a character of Chatham which probably reflects the views of the writer much more faithfully than anything which was intended for the public. Shackleton had apparently written something about the moral dangers of party warfare. Burke answered that parties in politics were absolutely inevitable, and that he had only known three classes of men who kept free from them. There were a few country gentlemen who took no considerable part in public business; there were place-hunters, whose sole object was the pursuit of their private interest; and there were 'ambitious men of light or no principles, who in their turns make use of all parties, and therefore avoid entering into what may be construed into an engagement with any.' 'Such,' he added, 'was in a great measure the late Earl of Chatham, who expected a very blind submission of men to him without considering himself as having any reciprocal obligation to them. It is true that he very often rewarded such submission

[1] *Burke's Correspondence*, i. 179, 204, 206, 252, 475, 506; ii. 55, 63, 78.

in a very splendid manner, but with very little marks of respect or regard to the objects of his favour; and as he put confidence in no man, he had very few feelings of resentment against those who the most bitterly opposed or most basely betrayed him.'[1]

These passages will be sufficient to show the nature and extent of the dislike which Burke felt towards Chatham, and the chief reasons on which it was based. 'The Thoughts on the Cause of the present Discontents,' which was written by Burke in answer to a pamphlet by a follower of Grenville, exhibited in the most masterly manner the whole system of Rockingham's politics. In its original draught it contained a direct attack upon Chatham, which it was deemed politic to suppress,[2] and it is impossible to read it with attention without perceiving that it implied a severe censure upon his whole past policy. Though one of the most valuable permanent contributions ever made to English political philosophy, its appearance at a time when Grenville, Chatham, and Rockingham were united on the questions growing out of the Middlesex election, was regarded with much reason as of very doubtful expediency.[3] Chatham, in a letter to Rockingham, complained that it had done much hurt to the cause, and had dangerously narrowed the basis of opposition. 'In the wide and extensive public, the whole alone can save the whole against the desperate designs of the Court. Let us for God's sake employ our efforts to remove all just obstacles to a true public-spirited union of all who will not be slaves.'[4]

---

[1] *Burke's Correspondence*, ii. 276, 277.

[2] Ibid. i. 200.

[3] See the remarks of Walpole, *Memoirs of George III.* iv. 129–135.

[4] Rockingham's *Memoirs*, ii. 193–195. This letter bears the following strange and very melancholy endorsement written by Burke more than twenty years later amid the excitement of the French Revolution. 'July 13, 1792. Looking over poor Lord Rockingham's papers, I find this letter from a man wholly unlike

On the subject of parliamentary reform also, Burke differed widely from Chatham, and he manifested a far greater distrust of popular politics. In many respects, indeed, he may be justly regarded as a reformer. No one asserted more strongly that 'to give a direction, a form, a technical dress and a specific sanction to the general sense of the community is the true end of the Legislature;' that the Sovereign and the House of Lords, as well as the Commons, must be regarded as only trustees for the people; that the Lower House was not intended to be a control upon the people, but a control for them. He quoted with full approval the saying of Sully that popular revolts never spring from a desire to attack, but always from an impatience of suffering, a saying which has lost much of its truth since the democratic agencies of modern times have begun to act powerfully, systematically, and habitually upon classes which were once wholly untouched by political agitations. In all disputes between the people and their rulers, he contended, the presumption is at least on a par in favour of the people, for they have no interest in disorder, while the governing classes have

him. It concerns my pamphlet (*The Cause of the Discontents*). I remember to have seen this knavish letter at the time. The pamphlet is itself by anticipation an answer to that grand artificer of fraud. *He* would not like it. It is pleasant to hear *him* talk of the *great extensive public* who never conversed but with a parcel of low toad-eaters. Alas! alas! how different the *real* from the ostensible public man! Must all this theatrical stuffing and raised heels be necessary for the character of a great man? Edmund Burke. Oh! but this does not derogate from his great, splendid side, God forbid!—E. B.' In Mrs. Crewe's Memoranda of Burke's Conversation there is the following more favourable character of Chatham. 'Lord Chatham was a great minister and bold in his undertakings. He inspired the people with warlike ardour when it was necessary. He considered mobs in the light of a raw material which might be manufactured to a proper stuff for their own happiness in the end.'—Rogers's *Recollections*, p. 82.

many sinister influences to determine their policy.[1] No statesman defended more ably the rights of electors in the case of the Middlesex election. He supported Grenville's Bill for terminating the scandalously partial decisions of disputed elections. He was perhaps the first statesman who urged that lists of the voters in every important division should be published, in order that the people might be able to judge the conduct of their representatives. He advocated parliamentary reporting. He strenuously defended the right of free criticism in the debates upon the Libel Bill. He supported the disfranchisement of revenue officers. He was the author of one of the most comprehensive measures ever carried through Parliament for diminishing the number of those superfluous places which were a chief source of the corruption of Parliament, and when in opposition he advocated a much larger reduction than he was able in his short period of official life to effect.

All these were great measures of reform, but beyond these he refused to move. To the demand for short Parliaments he offered a strenuous opposition. He urged with great weight and truth the horrible disorder and corruption which constantly recurring elections would produce, as well as the inevitable deterioration of the character, influence, and competence of Parliaments that would arise from frequent breaches in the continuity of public business, and frequent changes in the men who conducted it; and he maintained that the remedy would rather aggravate than diminish the great evil of Court influence. Triennial Parliaments meant triennial contests of independent gentlemen with only their private fortunes to support them, with Court candidates supported by the money

[1] *Thoughts on the Cause of the present Discontents. Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol. Speech on the Duration of Parliaments.*

and influence of the Treasury; and members who felt their seats tottering beneath them, were at least as likely to lean for support upon the ministry as upon the people. It was noticed by every experienced politician that the influence of the ministry was much greater in the first and last sessions of a Parliament than in the intermediate sessions when members sat a little more firmly on their seats.[1]

A Place Bill, which was another favourite remedy, he almost equally disliked. It was quite right to prune the scandalous redundancy of sinecures and Court places which supplied the minister with such inordinate means of influencing votes. But to remove the responsible heads of the great civil departments and of the army and navy from Parliament, and to disconnect the greater part of those who held civil employments from all parliamentary interest, could not fail to lower the position of the Legislature, and to endanger the safety of the Constitution.[2]

He was not less hostile to the doctrine, which was rapidly spreading over England, that representatives are simply delegates, and must accept, even against their own judgments, imperative instructions from their constituents. On his election for Bristol in 1774 his colleague spoke in favour of the coercive force of instructions, while Burke at once denounced them as resting upon an essential misconception of the nature of repre-

[1] *Speech on the Duration of Parliaments.* It is curious to contrast this with the statement of Junius that 'the last session of a septennial Parliament is usually employed in courting the favour of the people.'—Dedication to the English People. Charles I. thought long Parliaments specially hostile to royal influence. He wrote to Wentworth (January 22, 1634–5), 'Parliaments are of the nature of cats. They ever grow curst with age; so that if you will have good of them, put them off handsomely when they come to any age, for young ones are ever most tractable.'

[2] *Thoughts on the Cause of the present Discontents.*

sentative government. 'Your representative owes you,' he said, 'not his industry only, but his judgment, and he betrays instead of serving you if he sacrifices it to your opinion. . . . Parliament is not a congress of ambassadors from different and hostile interests. . . . It is a deliberative assembly of one nation with one interest, that of the whole; where not local purposes nor local prejudices ought to guide, but the general good. . . . You choose a member indeed, but when you have chosen him he is not member of Bristol, but a member of Parliament.' Electors are competent to select a man of judgment and knowledge to send into the great council of the nation; but they are not competent to determine the details of legislation, and an attempt to usurp this function would inevitably lower the character of Parliament. 'Government and legislation are matters of reason and judgment.' Every member is bound to decide upon the arguments that are placed before him what course is best for the whole community, and 'what sort of reason is that in which one set of men deliberate and another decide, and where those who form the conclusion are perhaps 300 miles distant from those who hear the arguments?' These views were generally adopted by the Whig party, and it appears to have been mainly due to the influence of Burke that the fashion of authoritative instructions, which after the Middlesex election threatened to become universal in popular constituencies, in a few years almost passed away.

But Burke went much further than this. He protested against any change in the essential constitution of Parliament, and he looked with a disgust and an indignation, which he was at no pains to conceal, upon the levelling doctrines and the sweeping changes that were advocated by the Society of the Supporters of the Bill of Rights. 'The bane of the Whigs,' he once wrote, 'has been the admission among them of the corps of

schemers who in reality and at bottom mean little more than to indulge themselves with speculations, but who do us infinite mischief by persuading many sober and well-meaning people that we have designs inconsistent with the Constitution left us by our forefathers. . . . Would to God it were in our power to keep things as they are in point of form, provided we were able to improve them in point of substance. The machine itself is well enough to answer any good purpose, provided the materials were sound.'[1] In accordance with these views he opposed all attempts to lower the suffrage, to abolish the rotten boroughs, to add to the county representation, or in any way to modify the framework of Parliament. In the face of the glaring and monstrous abuses of the representative system he deprecated all change, and even all discussion of the Constitution.

[1] *Burke's Correspondence*, ii. 383. So again he speaks of 'a rotten subdivision of a faction amongst ourselves who have done us infinite mischief by the violence, rashness, and often wickedness of their measures. I mean the Bill of Rights people;' and he adds, 'If no remedy can be found in the disposition of capital people, in the temper, spirit (and docility too) of the lower, and in the thorough union of both, nothing can be done by any alteration in forms.' Ibid. i. 229, 231. In a later letter he says, 'If the nation at large has disposition enough to oppose all bad principles and bad men, its form of government is in my opinion fully sufficient for it; but if the general disposition be against a virtuous and manly line of public conduct, there is no form into which it can be thrown that will improve its nature or add to its energy.' Ibid. ii. 384. Speaking of the assertion 'that we are not happy enough to enjoy a sufficient number of voters in England,' he says, 'I believe that most sober thinkers on this subject are rather of opinion that our fault is on the other side, and that it would be more in the spirit of our Constitution and more agreeable to the pattern of our best laws, by lessening the number to add to the weight and independency of our voters. And truly, considering the immense and dangerous charge of elections, the prostitute and daring venality, the corruption of manners, the idleness and profligacy of the lower sort of voters, no prudent man would propose to increase such an evil.'—*Observations on the State of the Nation.*

'However much,' he said, 'a change might improve the platform, it could add nothing to the authority of the Legislature.' 'Authority depending on opinion at least as much as on duty, an idea circulated among the people that our Constitution is not so perfect as it ought to be, before you are sure of mending it, is a certain method of lessening it in the public opinion.' 'There is a difference between a moral and political exposure of a public evil relative to the administration of government, whether of men or systems, and a declaration of defects real or supposed in the fundamental constitution of your country.' 'When the frame and constitution of the State is disgraced, patriotism is destroyed in its very source. . . . Our first, our dearest, most comprehensive relation, our country is gone.' He deplored as a great evil 'the irreverent opinion of Parliament which had grown up.' He complained 'that we are grown out of humour with the English Constitution itself,' 'that it is never to have a quietus, but is continually vilified and attacked,' and he quoted with evident sympathy the opinion of those who believed 'that neither now nor at any time is it prudent or safe to be meddling with the fundamental principles and ancient tried usages of our Constitution, that our representation is as nearly perfect as the necessary imperfection of human affairs and of human creatures will suffer it to be, and that it is a subject of prudent and honest use and thankful enjoyment, and not of captious criticism or rash experiment.'[1]

These views he held with consistent earnestness through every portion of his life. They appeared in the 'Observations on the State of the Nation,' and in the 'Thoughts on the Cause of the present Discontents,' which were written amid the agitation that followed the

[1] See especially his speech on the Reform of Parliament. Burke's *Works*, x. 92–108.

Middlesex election. In 1780 he seriously thought of retiring from politics on account of the secession of a portion of his party to the Radical views.[1] In 1782, when the younger Pitt introduced the question of parliamentary reform, Burke was his most vehement and most formidable opponent, and he never varied on the question till the sympathy of his party with the democratic aspects of the French Revolution finally severed him from the Whigs. His imagination, which seldom failed to intensify the conclusions of his reason, transfigured the British Constitution into a work of almost superhuman wisdom, and he made it the object of an almost adoring reverence. To unfold its matchless beauties, to trace its far-reaching consequences, to describe the evils that would flow from any attempt to tamper with it, to guard it from captious and irreverent criticism, became a constant object of his life. He possessed to an extraordinary degree that 'retrospective imagination' which Moore has, I think, truly described as a characteristic of his countrymen, and he clung with an instinctive affection to every institution which represented the labours and the experiences, which was interwoven with the habits, associations, and sympathies of many generations, and was supported not only by deliberate judgments but by prescription, custom, unconscious and unreasoning prejudice. It cost him much to eradicate anything that was deeply planted in the habits of a nation, to sap or relax any organism which derived its strength from the long traditions of the past. His writings after the outburst of the French Revolution contain the most powerful apology in all literature for these modes of thinking and feeling, but it is a complete misconception to suppose that his conduct after the Revolution was an apostasy, was anything but the

[1] *Correspondence*, ii. 385, 386.

natural and indeed inevitable development of his career. The evil of those levelling, speculative, and metaphysical theories of politics which triumphed at the Revolution was one of his earliest and deepest convictions. It may be traced in every important political work which proceeded from his pen, and it was clearly visible to his contemporaries. Mrs. Macaulay, who was the ablest writer of the New Radical School, at once recognised in Burke the most formidable antagonist of her ways of thinking, and she wrote a reply to his 'Thoughts on the Cause of the present Discontents,' in which she described that pamphlet as containing 'a poison sufficient to destroy all the little virtue and understanding of sound policy which is left in the nation,' and as peculiarly fitted to divert the nation from 'organic and truly useful reforms,' to a revival of 'aristocratic faction.' Walpole in 1772 wrote, 'Burke was certainly in his principles no moderate man, and when his party did not interfere generally leaned towards the arbitrary side, as appeared in the debates on the Church.'[1] Bishop Watson declared that long before the French Revolution he had come to regard Burke as 'a High Churchman in religion,' and 'a Tory, perhaps indeed an aristocratic Tory, in the State.'[2] During the Warren Hastings trial his colleagues noticed as a curious characteristic of his mind, the special vehemence with which he dilated on any outrage done to an ancient dynasty, to the worship and the sanctity even of a pagan creed.[3]

It will probably now appear to most persons that on

[1] *Last Journals*, i. 84.

[2] Watson's *Anecdotes of his Own Time*, i. 132.

[3] Lord Holland writes: 'Mr. Fox has more than once assured me that in his [Burke's] invectives against Mr. Hastings's indignities to the Indian priesthood, he spoke of the piety of the Hindoos with admiration, and of their holy religion and sacred functions with an awe bordering on devotion.'—Lord Holland's *Memoirs of the Whig Party*, i. 5, 6. See, too, Moore's *Life of Sheridan*, ii. 94, 95.

the subject of parliamentary reform Chatham exhibited a far greater wisdom than Burke, and that the reverence with which Burke looked upon the Constitution as it existed in his day was exaggerated even to extravagance. The corruption and indeed absurdity of the representative system could hardly be overstated; and experience, which is the one sure test in politics, has decisively shown that it was possible to reform the abuses of Parliament and to allay the deep discontent of the nation without impairing, for any good purpose, the efficiency of government. With Burke an extreme dread of organic change co-existed with a great disposition to administrative reform. The Tory party, which prevailed after the French Revolution, adopted one side of his teaching, but wholly discarded the other, and they made the indiscriminate defence of every abuse, and the repression or restriction of every kind of political liberty, the great end of government. At last in Canning and his followers a school of statesmen arose on whom Burke might have looked with favour, who were bitterly opposed to any considerable change in the constitution of the House of Commons, but who were at the same time ardent advocates of religious and commercial freedom, of a liberal foreign policy, and of administrative reform. But the abuses of the representative system, which had long been increasing, soon became intolerable, and in 1832 an irresistible wave of public opinion swept away the more corrupt portions of the borough system, and with it the deep English prejudice against parliamentary reform.

It is well worth trying, at a time when very different modes of political thought are prevailing, to realise the reasons which underlie the opinions of Burke. Even the errors of so great a thinker are often more instructive than the wisdom of lesser men, for they spring not from poverty of thought, or want of insight or sagacity,

but merely from imperfections of mental balance. No politician ever saw more clearly than Burke the remote, subtle, and indirect, as well as the more immediate consequences of institutions and measures. It was in comparing the good and evil, the advantages and the dangers, that his judgment was often refracted by his passions or his imagination.

It must be observed, in the first place, that he never adopted some of the favourite arguments of the opponents of reform. The opinion that nomination boroughs were a legitimate form of private property, which cannot be touched without confiscation, was expressed by no less a writer than Junius, and was countenanced by the younger Pitt; but no traces of it will, I believe, be found in the writings of Burke. Nor did he ever hold the favourite Tory doctrine that all right of representation rests ultimately in the owners of the soil. Divine right, whether of kings, or nobles, or freeholders, had no place in his political philosophy. On one occasion when a county member maintained this doctrine, Burke took great pains to refute it, showing, by the antiquity of the boroughs, and by the early presence of lawyers in the House, that in the theory of the Constitution the commercial interest and the professions had as much right to representation as the landed interest.[1] 'The virtue, spirit, and essence,' he once said, 'of a House of Commons consists in its being the express image of the feelings of the nation.'[2]

His first and most important objection to the Radical school of politicians was the method of their reasoning. Nine-tenths of the reformers of his time, as he

[1] *Parl. Hist.* xvi. 920, 921.

[2] *Thoughts on the present Discontents.* So, again, 'To govern according to the sense and agreeably to the interests of the people, is a great and glorious object of government' (Speech on the Duration of Parliaments). *Works*, x. 73.

truly said, argued on the ground of natural right, and treated representation not as a question of expediency, but as a question of morals.[1] Inequalities in their view were equivalent to injustices. All men are naturally equal, all had an equal right to self-government, and therefore to an equal share in the representation. It is evident that if this principle were admitted, it would lead to a complete subversion of that whole system of complex, balanced, prescriptive, and heterogeneous government which is known under the name of the British Constitution. It would lead by a logical necessity to universal suffrage, to equal electoral districts, to the destruction of a monarchy and a political aristocracy which did not emanate directly from the people. Nor were these the only dangers to be apprehended. A mode of reasoning which described the House of Commons as neither actually nor virtually representative, and persuaded the people that their natural rights were violated by each branch of the Legislature, could not fail to destroy all feeling of affection for the country and for its Government.

In opposition to these views it was the first principle of Burke and of the school of Whig politicians who took their politics from his writings, that Government rests wholly on expediency, that its end is the good of the community, and that it must be judged exclusively by the degree in which it fulfils this end. The Whig in this respect stood equally apart from the Tory and from the Radical of the eighteenth century. The Tory maintained a theological doctrine of the divine right of kings as the corner-stone of his politics. The Radical rested upon metaphysical doctrines about natural rights and the natural equality of men, and anomalies, inequalities, inequitable dispositions of political power were

[1] Speech on the Reform of Parliament (1782). *Works*, x. 95.

the chief subjects of his complaints. In the judgment of Burke this mode of reasoning is essentially and fundamentally false. Government is a matter of experience, and not a matter of theory. The sole question to be asked about an institution is, how it works. That it is an anomaly, that it is formed on other principles from other parts of the Government, that it is what is falsely called 'illogical,' or, in other words, in dissonance with the general tendency of the institutions of the country, is no valid argument against it. The term 'logic' is rightly applied to trains of reasoning, but not to political institutions; for the object of these is neither truth nor consistency nor symmetry but utility.

It may indeed be truly said that no Government which is simple and symmetrical can be a good one, and that the anomalies which are often regarded as the chief blemishes are in truth among the chief excellences of the Constitution. For Government is obliged to discharge the most various functions, to aim at many distinct and sometimes inconsistent ends. It is the trustee and the guardian of the multifarious, complicated, fluctuating, and often conflicting interests of a highly composite and artificial society. The principle that tends towards one set of advantages impairs another. The remedies which apply to one set of dangers would, if not partially counteracted, produce another. The institutions which are admirably adapted to protect one class of interests, may be detrimental to another. It is only by constant adjustments, by checks and counterchecks, by various contrivances adapted to various needs, by compromises between competing interests, by continual modifications applied to changing circumstances, that a system is slowly formed which corresponds to the requirements and conditions of the country, discharges the greatest number of useful functions, and favours in their due proportion and degree the

greatest number of distinct and often diverging interests. The comparative prominence of different interests, tendencies, and dangers, must continually occupy the legislator, and he will often have to provide limitations and obstacles to the very tendency which he wishes to make the strongest in his legislation. In the words of Burke, 'There is not, there never was, a principle of government under heaven that does not, in the very pursuit of the good it proposes, naturally and inevitably lead into some inconvenience which makes it absolutely necessary to counterwork and weaken the application of that first principle itself, and to abandon something of the extent of the advantage you proposed by it, in order to prevent also the inconveniences which have arisen from the instrument of all the good you had in view.'[1] The legitimate place of abstract reasoning in politics is therefore a very small one. In political theories, 'the major makes a pompous figure in the battle, but the victory of truth depends upon the little minor of circumstances.' 'Circumstances give in reality to every political principle its distinguishing colour and discriminating effect. The circumstances are what render every civil and political scheme beneficial or obnoxious to mankind.'

To make these views more clear, let us consider for a short time what are the objects which a representative system in England in our own century is expected to attain. It must, in the first place, bring together a Parliament so distinguished for its ability, its political knowledge, and its integrity, that it may be safely entrusted with the chief voice in the Government of the Empire. No task can be conceived more serious or more responsible than that which is imposed on it.

[1] Speech on the Duration of Parliaments. *Works*, x. 73.

The welfare of at least a fifth part of the human race, the relations of this great multitude to the remainder of their kind, the future of millions who are yet unborn, is largely dependent on its decisions. Races, religions, interests, social conditions the most various and the most hostile, pass under its control, and a single false step may be traced in blood over the history of centuries. It is not expected or required that every member of Parliament should be competent to discharge the high and difficult functions of a statesman, but Parliament must at least include many such men; it must discover, support, and restrain them; and it must exercise a general supervision over the vast and complex field of imperial interests. This is necessary for the welfare and even for the existence of the Empire. It is equally necessary to the popular character of the Government; for if the House of Commons is manifestly inefficient and corrupt, it will inevitably decay. It becomes, then, a matter of the most vital importance to consider by what classes a body which is entrusted with these momentous functions is to be elected. Politics would be unlike any other product of the human mind if it were not true that a high average of intelligence among the electors was necessary for a high average of intelligence among the representatives. If the predominating power of election be placed in the hands of the poorest and the most ignorant classes of the community; if it be entrusted mainly to those who have no political knowledge, no real political opinions, no sense of political responsibility; if this great mass of elective incompetence be carefully sheltered from the influence of the more instructed classes, what can possibly be expected except the degradation of Parliament and the decay of the Empire? Nothing in the whole history of superstition is more grotesque than the doctrine that the panacea for parliamentary evils is to be

found in lowering the suffrage, as though by some amazing process of political alchemy the ability and intelligence of the representative body were likely to increase in direct proportion to the ignorance and incapacity of the elective body. And the difficulty of the problem is greatly aggravated by the fact that it is necessary to the efficiency of Parliament that it should not only maintain a high average of ability, but also that it should include many young men capable of devoting their lives to the work of statesmanship.

These are among the results which a good elective system is required to accomplish; but it is not true that the sole object of parliamentary government is to secure the best men for the management of the State. It is also required to secure a representation of the people, and under this term many distinct considerations are comprised. Parliament is in the first place a representative of the property of the country. After the maintenance of personal security, the very first object for which all government is created is to secure to every member of the community the possession and enjoyment of that which he has honestly earned or honestly received from others. In practical as in theoretical politics, taxation and representation are very closely connected, and one of the first signs of the undue preponderance or depression of a class is usually to be found in partial and unfair adjustments of taxation. In an ideal system every taxpayer should have some political weight; but it should be a weight proportioned to the amount of his contributions. A bad representative system may easily become an instrument of legal confiscation, one class voting the taxes which another class is obliged to pay, one class plunging the Government into a career of extravagance under the conviction that the burden of the expense will be thrown upon another. Besides this, the possession of property, but especially of property

which is moderate in its amount and somewhat precarious in its character, is the chief steadying and restraining influence in politics. Experience shows that the diffusion through the bulk of a community of a fair measure of education and enlightenment is no real guarantee against the pursuit of Utopias, against the contagion of wild, dangerous, or malignant enthusiasms, against the introduction into political life of that spirit of speculation and experiment, of gambling and of adventure, which always leads nations to disaster if not to ruin. It is of capital importance to all nations, but especially to free nations, that they should attain a large measure of stability in their affairs, and that the spirit of caution should predominate in their councils. In no other way can these ends be so adequately reached as by placing the chief political power in the hands of the classes whose material interests are most immediately and most obviously affected by anarchy or by war.

Parliament is, again, a representative of the opinions of the nation. The various ideas, aspirations, and discontents which are circulating in the community should find an expression within its walls, and an expression in some degree proportionate to their weight in the country. To effect this is very difficult, and no simple and symmetrical system of election can attain it; for the divisions of opinion do not correspond with any accuracy to the divisions of classes. Great multitudes can hardly be said to contribute anything to public opinion; and there is much danger of only two or three broad lines being represented, while the intermediate, minor, and rising schools of political thought are suppressed. There are also grave and opposite evils connected with the representation of opinions to be guarded against. It is right that the different forms of political opinion which exist in the nation should be represented; but it is also right that they should hold a due sub-

ordination to the great leading principles of party divisions. When Parliament is disintegrated into numerous small fractions acting independently of party organisations, the Executive, being unable to count upon steady majorities, loses all power, and the policy of the country all firmness, consistency, and continuity. On the other hand, it is a great evil when party discipline is too perfect, and when party outlines are too sharply defined. A minister commanding a majority is then able to defy any preponderance of argument against his measures in Parliament, and to neglect great outbursts of discontent in the country; and all those intermediate shades of opinion which produce compromises, soften transitions, and prepare coalitions, disappear. Parliament at different times has been subject to each of these diseases, and their remedy is to be found much more in public opinion than in mere political machinery. It is of the utmost importance, both to the efficiency of a representative body and to its moral influence in the country, that it should reflect as far as possible the various modes of political thought subsisting among the people. Most great truths which have arisen among mankind have been long peculiar to small minorities, and it is a grave calamity if the voice of those minorities should be long unheard in the councils of the nation. Even if an opinion be wholly or partially erroneous, it is well that Parliament should come into direct contact with its representatives. One of the greatest dangers to parliamentary government, one of the surest causes of the decay of loyalty and patriotism, is the growth of great masses of unrepresented opinion. The pacifying influence of Parliament arises chiefly from the fact that it is the safety-valve of the nation; that it gives a voice to its wants, discontents, suspicions, and aspirations; brings them under the direct cognisance of the Government, and submits them to a full and serious examination.

Parliament, again, is the representative of classes and of interests. Every class has its own interests, which should be protected; its own habits of thought, which should be represented; its own special knowledge to contribute to the government of the country. It is necessary that the views of all should be represented. It is also necessary that no one should swamp or overwhelm the others. All government must be carried on by tradition, in regular grooves, according to a formed system; and it is practically impossible that such a system can continue through several generations under the control of a single section of the community without being unduly directed towards the promotion of its special interests. When one class possesses a monopoly or an overwhelming preponderance of power, it is almost certain to abuse it; and even apart from the temptation to a consciously selfish policy, a mixture of classes is very essential to soundness of political judgment.

Experience shows how little this is attained by placing political power exclusively in the hands of a small and restricted class, even when as a whole it is incontestably the most enlightened. Class bias often does more to distort than education to expand the intellect, and rectitude of moral judgment is by no means proportioned to intellectual development. It is those who from their position are brought into closest personal contact with the chief actors in the fray, who are most liable to treat politics as a game and to care more for the party bearing of measures than for their real or intrinsic merit. A small wealthy class is much less quickly and seriously injured by the consequences of misgovernment than the great industrial community. It may even be benefited by a policy which is very injurious to the country at large, and it is liable to many special distorting influences. The close social connection which binds the English upper classes to the Established

Church, to the army, to the Indian and diplomatic services, has often had a very perceptible influence upon their policy, and they have always been prone to the spirit of 'clique and of coterie,' to a certain over-refinement of reasoning which is peculiarly misleading in practical politics, to the habit of judging great questions on personal grounds or on side issues. No other constituencies represent so exclusively the highly educated classes as the Universities, and the political influence of the Universities has on the whole been unfavourable to political progress. It is very necessary that opinions which have been formed in the drawing-room or the study should be brought in contact with that shrewd middle-class intellect which judges questions on broader issues and sometimes with larger sympathies.[1] There are, it is true, great sections of the community who are quite incapable of forming any reasonable or competent judgment on political questions; but they, too, have their interests, which may be injured, and it is right that their sufferings and their real or fancied grievances should find a voice in the Legislature. In politics, the evils that spring from monopoly are sometimes even graver than the evils which spring from incompetence. To maintain a proper balance of class representation is a task of no small delicacy; and as the most ignorant and most incompetent portion of the community is necessarily the most numerous, it is evident that an

[1] 'One may generally observe that the body of a people has juster views for the public good, and pursues them with greater uprightness, than the nobility and gentry, who have so many private expectations and particular interests, which hang like a false bias upon their judgments, and may possibly dispose them to sacrifice the good of their country to the advancement of their own fortunes, whereas the gross of the people can have no other prospect in changes and revolutions than of public blessings, that are to diffuse themselves through the whole State in general.'—Addison's *Remarks on Italy*.

elective system which was at once perfectly simple and perfectly democratic would establish an overwhelming preponderance in favour of the classes least fitted to exercise it.

It must be remembered, too, that the ostensible effects of changes in class representation are often very different from the real effects. The pursuit of equality sometimes leads to the creation of a new aristocracy, to new concentrations of political power. When votes were given in the eighteenth century to the 40*s.* freeholders in Ireland, the measure was apparently a very democratic one, and it was the more remarkable because the new electors were chiefly Catholic. In reality its effect was to increase greatly the landlord power. For many years the landlord could count upon the votes of the 40*s.* freeholders on his estate with the most absolute certainty. At last, on one memorable occasion of vital interest to their religion, they presumed to act for themselves. At the Clare election they opposed and defeated their landlords, returned O'Connell to Parliament, and compelled a reluctant Government to concede Catholic Emancipation. It was their first act of independence, and Parliament at once interposed to disfranchise them. When a large class of voters are perfectly ignorant and dependent, they must necessarily either sell their votes or bestow them according to the directions of a leader. The landlord, the manufacturer, the Catholic priest, the Anglican clergyman, the Dissenting minister, the public-house keeper, the secretary of the trades-union, acquire under such circumstances an extraordinary importance. In purely democratic countries, where the natural social influences are comparatively weak, adventurers frequently arise, who make it their aim, by obtaining the direction of the most ignorant voters, to organise and accumulate great masses of political power, and thus to acquire a preponderating power in the State.

We have here, then, a number of distinct advantages and dangers which must be considered in every good system of representative government. No one of the ends I have enumerated can be neglected without impairing the efficiency of the machine. Yet no one of them can be fully and perfectly attained without a sacrifice of one or more of the others. The question is one of proportion and of degree, of balance and of adjustment. The evils of government lie sometimes in defects of representation and sometimes in vices of administration; and that is on the whole the best which produces fewest evils and discharges the greatest variety of useful functions. Organic legislative changes are scarcely ever unqualified benefits. The statesman has usually to ask himself whether a proposed change removes greater evils than it produces; whether the evils which are now greater do not tend naturally to diminish, and those which are now less, to increase; whether, even if the immediate change be an incontestable good, it may not lead to other changes, or produce remote consequences which alter the balance. It is a dangerous thing to arrest the growth of a living organism; it is a fatal thing to disturb the foundations of an ancient building; and there are lines of policy to which each of these metaphors may be justly applied. The problem of legislation is a practical problem of great difficulty, to be solved by a simultaneous attention to many distinct and often conflicting considerations, and not by any short method of logic or equalisation. A representative system may, no doubt, be framed by this latter method, but it would be essentially different from the English Constitution, destitute of its distinctive merits, and at variance with the whole course of its traditions. This was the lesson which Burke was never tired of inculcating, and his dislike to the methods and reasoning of the reformers lay at the root of his dislike to the measures

they advocated. 'That man,' he said, 'thinks much too highly, and therefore he thinks weakly and delusively, of any contrivance of human wisdom, who believes that it can make any sort of approach to perfection.' Taking this maxim as a guide, he entirely denied that Parliament exhibited any evils which could not be sufficiently met by secondary remedies, leaving its organic framework untouched. The Constitution as it existed was 'made by the peculiar circumstances, occasions, tempers, dispositions, and moral, civil, and social habitudes of the people, which disclose themselves only in a long space of time. It was a vestment which accommodates itself to the body.' What evil or grievance, he asked, can be distinctly referred 'to the representative not following the opinion of his constituents?' Was it not a fact that under the Constitution which it had become the fashion to decry, the country had enjoyed 'a growing liberty and a growing prosperity for 500 years?' Is it true that the local interests of Cornwall and Wiltshire, where the representation is enormously exaggerated, are less attended to than those of Yorkshire or Warwickshire? Warwick has members—is it more opulent, happy, and free than Birmingham, which is unrepresented?[1]

It is quite possible to recognise the full justice of the general principles laid down by Burke without accepting the consequences he drew from them. It is true that representation is not a matter of speculation but a matter of expediency, but it is also true that the English representative system had become so corrupt and so imperfect, that as a matter of the merest expediency its reform was imperatively demanded. The extreme venality of the representative body, the fact that Crown influence and aristocratic influence were

[1] Burke's *Works*, x. 97–102.

much more powerful within it than the influence of the people whom it was supposed to represent, its opposition during the whole of the Wilkes case to the sentiments of the people, and its constant tendency to infringe upon the province of the law, could not reasonably be denied. It may be true that the local interests of the unrepresented portions of the country were not neglected, but it is very certain that the monopoly of power which a small class possessed was reflected very clearly in the strong class bias of the law, and that the education, the sanitary condition, and the material well-being of the great unrepresented masses of the nation were shamefully neglected. No one who contrasts English legislation since it has acquired a more popular character with that of the eighteenth century can be insensible to this fact.

Nor is it true that a modification of the representative system was equivalent to a subversion of the Constitution. It was never intended that this system should remain stereotyped and unaltered while great centres of population rose and decayed, and while the relative importance of different classes and of different portions of the country was entirely altered. The Crown had long exercised a power of calling constituencies into existence as the condition of the country required. As might, however, have been expected, this prerogative was shamefully abused: under the Stuarts it was employed solely or mainly for corrupt purposes, and the feeling against it was so strong that the enfranchisement of Newark-on-Trent by Charles II. was the last instance of its exercise. This branch of the prerogative having fallen into desuetude, it was for the whole Legislature to replace it; but the peculiar condition of public opinion at the Revolution, and the long period of disputed succession and aristocratical predominance which followed, adjourned the

question. Had the task of parliamentary reform been begun in the eighteenth century, had the seats of small boroughs, which were proved to be corrupt, been systematically transferred to the great towns, or to those portions of the country which were most inadequately represented, it is probable that far larger portions of the old inequalities that existed would have even now continued.

In judging, however, the opinions of Burke, there are some considerations to be remembered which are too often forgotten. Public opinion on the subject was very immature, and Burke continually affirmed that there was no strong or real demand for parliamentary reform, and that if such a demand were general, he would be ready to concede it.[1] Almost the only very active advocates of Reform were the City politicians, who were certainly not generally supported throughout the nation. The abolition of the rotten boroughs, which alone would have been a serious remedy, was demanded by no responsible politician, and in the existing state of parties and of public opinion it was manifestly impracticable. Triennial parliaments would probably have aggravated more evils than they palliated; and a large

[1] Thus in his speech against reform in 1782, he says: 'I went through most of the northern parts — the Yorkshire election was then raging; the year before, through most of the western counties—Bath, Bristol, Gloucester—not one word either in the towns or country on the subject of representation.' — Burke's *Works*, x. 101. In a remarkable letter on the same subject to the chairman of a Buckinghamshire meeting in 1780, he says: 'I most heartily wish that the deliberate sense of the kingdom on this great subject should be known. When it is known it must be prevalent. It would be dreadful indeed if there were any power in the nation capable of resisting its unanimous desire, or even the desire of any great and decided majority of the people. The people may be deceived in their choice of an object, but I can scarcely conceive any choice they can make to be so very mischievous as the existence of any human force capable of resisting it.'—Ibid. ix. 319, 320.

addition to the county representation, which was the favourite remedy of Chatham, found, as he himself acknowledged, but few and doubtful supporters. The lowering of the suffrage had scarcely any advocates of weight, and in the face of the utter ignorance and extreme lawlessness of the lower sections of society, and of the scenes of riot that had so lately been enacted, it would have required no small courage to attempt it.

It must be added, too, that the future of parliamentary government seemed much more doubtful than at present. The difficulties of maintaining this form of government continually appear in the writings of Burke. 'Our Constitution,' he writes, 'stands on a nice equipoise with steep precipices and deep waters upon all sides of it. In removing it from a dangerous leaning towards one side, there may be risk of oversetting it on the other.' He speaks of 'the extreme difficulty of reconciling liberty under a monarchical government with external strength and with internal tranquillity,'[1] and, like most of the leading Liberal statesmen of the time, he appears to have been continually haunted by a fear of the destruction of British liberty. In modern times such fears would hardly be seriously expressed by the gloomiest of prophets. The dangers hanging over parliamentary government are indeed grave and manifest; but they are of another kind. It is but too probable that Parliament may decline in ability and efficiency, that it may cease to attract the highest intellect and the highest social eminence of the country, that it may cease to include any considerable number of young men capable of devoting their lives to political duties, that the variety of opinions and interests existing within the country may no longer be represented within its walls. The increasingly demo-

[1] *Thoughts on the present Discontents.*

cratic character and the increasing strength of the House of Commons may make it impossible for it to co-operate with the other branches of the Legislature; and the constant intervention of the House in the proceedings of the Executive, and of the constituencies in the proceedings of the House, may profoundly alter its character as a legislative body. Governments living from day to day, looking only for immediate popularity, and depending on the fluctuating and capricious favour of great multitudes who have no settled political opinions, may gradually lose all firmness and tenacity, and all power of muscular contraction, all power of restraining, controlling, or resisting, may thus pass out of the body politic. The habit of sacrificing present advantages for the attainment of a distant object, or for the benefit of generations who are yet unborn, which is the essence of true national greatness, may decline. When every question is submitted directly to the popular verdict, it becomes more and more difficult to pursue any long-continued course of prescient policy, to guard against remote dangers, to preserve that amount of secrecy which in foreign policy is often indispensably necessary, to carry any measure which is not level with the average intelligence of the most uninstructed classes of the community,

The dangers resulting from this state of things are very real and serious. There are a few countries, among which the great American republic is the most conspicuous, which are so happily situated that it is scarcely possible for political follies seriously to injure them. There are others which are so situated that any considerable relaxation of their vigour, caution, and sagacity exposes them to absolute ruin. The insular situation of England makes many political follies, which might ruin a continental country, comparatively harmless; but, on the other hand, England is the centre of a vast, com-

plex, and highly artificial empire, which can only be maintained by the constant exertion of a very large amount of political wisdom and virtue. The remote and indirect consequences of a political measure are often more important than its immediate effects, but they have seldom much weight in popular judgments. It is even possible that so great a preponderance of votes may be placed in the hands of men who have no political opinions whatever, that statesmen may come to look upon the opinion and intelligence of the country as little more than one of the minor subdivisions of power, and may almost neglect it in their calculations if they can appeal successfully to the passions, the prejudices, or the fancied interests of the most ignorant masses of the population.

But serious as are the dangers that may threaten the efficiency of parliamentary government, this form of liberty has taken such deep root in European manners that its total destruction seems almost impossible. The degrees of power possessed by representative bodies differ widely, but there are very few countries in Europe, however backward, in which, in some form, they do not subsist. The public opinion which maintains them is no longer merely national. It is European, and it is supported by the great power of the European Press. But in the early years of George III. representative institutions were the rare exception, and the influence of foreign example and opinion was almost wholly on the side of despotism. Europe was strewn with the wrecks of the liberties of the past. The Cortes of Spain, the States-General of France, the republics of Central Italy, the greater part of the free institutions of the towns of Flanders, of Germany, and along the Baltic, had passed away. All the greatest States, all the most rising and vigorous Powers on the Continent, were despotic, and the few remaining sparks of liberty seemed

flickering in the socket. In 1766 the French king issued an edict declaring that he held his crown from God alone, and that he was the sole fountain of legislative power; and in 1771 the local parliaments, which formed the last feeble barrier to regal power, were abolished. In Sweden the royal authority was greatly aggrandised by the Revolution of 1772. In Switzerland, if Geneva had made some steps in the direction of democracy, in Berne, Fribourg, Soleure, Zurich, and Lucerne the government had degenerated into the narrowest oligarchy. In Holland, where the House of Orange had recovered a quasi-royal position in 1747, the growing corruption of the States-General and of the administration, the scandalous delays of the law, and the rapid decadence of the nation in Europe, were manifest to all.[1] Poland was already struggling in the throes of anarchy, and in 1772 she underwent her first partition. The freedom of Corsica was crushed by a foreign invader; Genoa had sunk into a corrupt oligarchy; Venice, though she still retained her republican government, and though she had enjoyed an unbroken calm since the peace of Passerowitz in 1718 had deprived her of the Morea and Cerigo, had fallen into complete insignificance, and her ancient liberties were ready to fall at the first touch of an invader's hand.

The prospects of liberty, and especially of monarchical liberty, were very gloomy; and during the American war it was the strong belief of the chief Whig politicians that the defeat of the Americans would be probably followed by a subversion of the Constitution of England. This fear acted in different ways upon different minds. With Burke it showed itself most clearly in an extreme caution in touching that Constitution which alone in

[1] See a striking letter by Rousseau to a Dutch gentleman 'On the present State of Liberty in Europe,' in the *American Remembrancer* for 1776, part ii. pp. 292–295.

Europe still maintained the union of political liberty with political greatness. He felt, as most profound thinkers have felt, that an appetite for organic change is one of the worst diseases that can affect a nation; that essential stability and the formation of settled political habits are the conditions of all good government; that amid the infinite variety and fluctuation of human circumstances, fashions, and opinions, institutions can never obtain a real strength or produce their full benefits till they have taken root in the habits of a nation, and have gathered around them a large amount of unreasoning and traditional support. He was keenly sensible how rapidly fabrics which have taken centuries to build may be destroyed, how easily the poise and balance of a mixed constitution may be irrevocably disturbed, how strong are the temptations drawing active and ambitious minds from the slow, laborious, and obscure process of administrative reform to the more stirring fields of revolutionary change. To oppose this tendency was one of the great objects of his life; and the dislike to fundamental changes, the attachment to traditional forms, and the indifference to theoretical anomalies, which had always been conspicuous in English political life, found their best expression and defence in his writings.

But if no great organic changes were attempted, a number of secondary reforms were accomplished which greatly improved the representative system. Perhaps the most important was George Grenville's measure for reforming the method of deciding disputed elections. I have described in a former chapter[1] the scandalous manner in which election petitions were adjudicated upon by a party vote of the whole House, how the proceedings had lost almost all semblance of a judicial act,

[1] See vol. ii. pp. 52–55.

how through the systematic disregard of evidence a large number of members owed their seats not to their constituents but to the House. Grenville predicted that 'the abominable prostitution of the House of Commons in elections by voting for whoever has the support of the ministers, must end in the ruin of public liberty if it be not checked,' and he asked the members whether they would not rather entrust their property to a jury drawn from the very dregs of the population than to such a tribunal. The scandal had long been wide and general, but the proceedings of the Middlesex election made it intolerable. It was generally felt that at a time when the outside public had begun to watch with a severe and jealous scrutiny the proceedings of the Commons, it was impossible that so glaring an abuse should be suffered to continue. It was too palpably absurd that the whole country should be convulsed with agitation, that the Constitution should be represented as outraged, and all the proceedings of Parliament as invalidated, because Luttrell had been substituted for Wilkes as member for Middlesex, while every Parliament probably contained twenty or thirty members who in reality owed their seats to a party vote in the House of Commons.

The measure of George Grenville remedying this evil was the last public service of that statesman. It transferred the decision of disputed elections from the whole House to a committee of fifteen members, thirteen of whom were elected by ballot, and the remaining two by the rival candidates. They were bound to examine all witnesses on oath, and they were themselves sworn to decide according to evidence. Lord North, who had just become Prime Minister, disliked the Bill, and endeavoured to postpone it, but it was supported by all the sections of the Whig party; it was advocated by Burke in one House and by Chatham in the other, and it found some support even in the Tory ranks. The

more honourable members of the party could not be insensible to the enormity of the scandal.[1] Sir W. Bagott, who was conspicuous among the county members, warmly supported the measure, and Mansfield prevented all serious opposition in the Lords by declaring himself in its favour. The Attorney-General, De Grey, vainly adjured the House to bear the present evils rather than 'fly to others which we know not of;'[2] and the measure, which was introduced in February 1770, received the royal assent in the following April. It was at first limited to seven years, but it proved so popular and so successful that in 1774 it was made perpetual.[3]

The Opposition were less successful in an attempt to disfranchise the revenue officers, whose numerous votes formed one of the great sources of the illegitimate power of the Crown. A motion to this effect was brought forward by Dowdeswell in February 1770, and it gave rise to a long and animated debate. It was

---

[1] Thus Dr. Johnson in a pamphlet called *The Patriot*, describing the old mode of trying elections, says: 'The claim of a candidate and the right of electors are said scarcely to have been, even in appearance, referred to conscience, but to have been decided by party, by passion, by prejudice, or by frolic. To have friends in the borough was of little use to him who wanted friends in the House; a pretence was easily found to evade a majority, and the seat was at last his that was chosen, not by his electors, but by his fellow-senators.' Since Grenville's Bill, he says, 'a disputed election is tried with the same scrupulousness and solemnity as any other title.'

[2] These were the last words of his speech. Wedderburn began his reply by continuing the quotation:

'And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.'

Parl. Hist. xvi. 921.

[3] Ibid. xvi. 902–923; xvii. 1062–1074. *Annual Register*, 1770, pp. 77, 78, 226, 227. Walpole's *George III.* iv. 111, 112. *Grenville Papers*, iv. 515, 516. Walpole's *Last Journals*, i. 314–325.

contended, probably with some truth, that if Charles I had possessed as extensive means as the reigning sovereign, of influencing and managing the constituencies, he might have succeeded in his design of enslaving the country, and the rapidly increasing importance of this evil was abundantly displayed. The Tory party had formerly complained of it, but they were now cordially united with the Ministry and with the King's friends, and Dowdeswell was defeated by 263 to 188.[1]

The pretensions of each House of Parliament to place itself outside the law were next dealt with. One of the most obnoxious of parliamentary privileges was the immunity from arrest for debt and for misdemeanour, and from civil suits, which was enjoyed not only by the members of both Houses, but also by their servants, during the Session of Parliament, and for forty days before and after. An enormous amount of fraud was thus sheltered, and tradesmen complained bitterly that, in the case of a large class of their customers, they had no legal method of enforcing their debts. At one time members of Parliament are said to have issued protections to persons who were not in their service, enabling them to secure the privilege of Parliament; but this practice was condemned by a Standing Order, and in 1677 a member named Wanklyn was expelled for granting a protection to a person, who was not his servant, in order to hinder the execution of a writ.[2] Two statutes, passed under William and Anne, very slightly abridged parliamentary privileges;[3] but, though several attempts had been made to abolish those of the servants of members, they always miscarried in the Commons

---

[1] *Parl. Hist.* xvi. 834–841. *Annual Register*, 1770, pp. 69–71.

[2] *Commons Journals*, vol. ix. 431. Burgh's *Political Disquisitions*, i. 212. See, too, 4 Geo. III. c. 33.

[3] 12 and 13 Wm. III. c. 3; 2 and 3 Anne, c. 18; see, too, 11 Geo. II. c. 24.

till the Middlesex election brought the whole question into the foreground. In 1770 a very important measure was carried, which enacted that any suit might at any time be brought against persons entitled to the privilege of Parliament; and though the immunity of members of the House of Commons from arrest was expressly reserved, no such privilege was any longer granted to their servants. By this measure the worst forms of parliamentary privilege were abolished, and a great step was taken towards the universal ascendency of law.[1]

At the same time the claim of the House of Commons to constitute itself a tribunal for the trial and punishment of private injuries done to its members was suffered totally to fall into desuetude. This power was altogether unknown to the law of England, and it was as inequitable as it was anomalous. During the two preceding reigns it had very frequently been exercised, but the last case appears to have been in 1767, when Mr. Luttrell complained to the House of a breach of privilege because some individuals had entered his fishery and taken fish.[2] The House referred the case to the Committee of Privileges, who examined witnesses without oaths, and who acquitted the prisoners. Proceedings of this kind had never been recognised by the law courts; but the victims were usually poor men, and the public were so indifferent to the matter that the House was enabled, without opposition, continually to try and imprison offenders by a process which was perfectly illegal. The Middlesex election, for the first time, aroused a strong public opinion on the subject;

---

[1] 10 Geo. III. c. 50. See, too, *Blackstone*, bk. i. ch. ii. May's *Law of Parliament*, ch. v. Mansfield spoke powerfully in favour of this measure. *Parl. Hist.* xvi. 974–978.

[2] *Commons Journals*, vol. xxxi. p. 540.

and, though no formal step was taken, the illegal power ceased from this time to be exercised.[1]

Another change, which, though much less important than the foregoing, was also significant of the altered relations of the Commons to the public, was the abolition of the rule which compelled all who were censured by the House for breach of privilege, to receive the censure upon their knees. The ceremony is said to have been brought into some ridicule in 1751 by a culprit who, on rising from the floor, exclaimed in a tone that was audible to all, while ostentatiously dusting his dress, that this was in truth 'the dirtiest house he had ever been in;' and in the same year a Scotch Jacobite named Alexander Murray, on being ordered to kneel, informed the indignant House that he never knelt except to God alone. It was found impossible to make him yield, and he was imprisoned in Newgate for four months, and was then released by a prorogation.[2] A few printers appear to have been subsequently censured in the usual form;[3] but in 1772, when the question of privilege was at its height, the Commons very judiciously resolved to prevent a repetition of the scandal, and the practice of kneeling was abolished by a standing order.

These measures are sufficient to show that, although both Houses of Parliament obstinately supported the Ministry in their contests with Wilkes, they were not insensible to the great change that had passed over the spirit of the country, and were prepared to allay the discontent by very considerable concessions. The immense progress the democratic spirit had made outside the walls was, indeed, too manifest to be overlooked.

---

[1] For a full history of parliamentary privilege, see Pemberton's *Letter to Lord Langdale on Parliamentary Privilege.*

[2] Walpole's *George II.* i. 17, 21, 29, 31.

[3] Andrews' *Hist. of British Journalism*, i. 208.

The institution of public meetings, the creation of great political organisations, the marked change in the attitude of constituents to their members, and the severe scrutiny with which the legal proceedings of Parliament were watched, were all signs of the growing ascendency of opinion. Writing at the end of 1769, Horace Walpole noticed that in the last reign the House of Lords had obtained an ascendency in the State, in the beginning of the present reign the Crown, at this time the people.[1] The victory was, it is true, very far from attained, and the dangers before the Constitution were of the gravest kind; but still the arena of the contest was changed and was enlarged. A new force had begun to enter powerfully into political calculations; and with the growth of public opinion, its organ, the Press, naturally acquired an increased importance.

We have already traced the early stages of its progress. We have seen how, in spite of the stamp and of the advertisement duty which had been imposed under Anne and increased under George II., and in spite of the numerous prosecutions instituted under the Grenville Ministry, its importance had been steadily growing. The increase of the number of papers was, indeed, not very rapid, but it appears to have been continuous. According to some statistics which were published, the number of stamps issued in the United Kingdom in 1753 was 7,411,757; in 1760, 9,464,790; in 1774, 12,300,000.[2] Seven new magazines were published in England between 1769 and 1771.[3]

The legal position of newspapers was one of considerable danger and perplexity. The conduct of the House of Commons in excepting libels from the offences that were covered by parliamentary privilege, shows

[1] Walpole's *George III.* iv. 1.
[2] Andrews' *Hist. of Journalism*, i. 211.
[3] Wright's *House of Hanover*, ii. 373.

the spirit of the legislators, and there was a great desire to withdraw Press cases, as far as possible, from the cognisance of juries. By the old method of *ex-officio* informations, which was now very frequently employed, the Attorney-General was able to send them to trial without the previous assent of a grand jury, and when the trials took place the judges laid down a doctrine on the subject of libels which almost transferred the decision from the juries to themselves.[1]

I have already referred to this doctrine. Lord Mansfield and those who agreed with him contended that, in all libel cases, there was a question of fact, which was altogether for the jury, and a question of law, which was altogether for the judge. The question of fact was, whether the incriminated person had written or published the alleged libel, and what was the meaning of its several clauses and expressions. The question of law was, whether the document bearing this meaning had or had not the character of a libel, and on this question the jury were bound to follow absolutely the direction of the judge. As the latter question, in the great majority of cases, was the sole real subject of dispute, the decision was virtually removed from the jury-box to the Bench.

To a mind unversed in the subtleties of law, such a position was not a little extraordinary. It was a strange thing to call upon twelve men to determine upon oath whether a man was guilty of the publication of a libel, and at the same time to forbid them to consider whether the document was a libel, and whether its publication involved guilt. It was a strange thing to introduce the words 'false and malicious' into the information laid before the jury, and then to say that 'these being mere formal words,'[2] the jury had no right

[1] See May's *Constitutional History*, ii. 107–116.

[2] See Lord Mansfield's statement of this view in Lord Campbell's *Lives of the Chief Justices*, ii. 478–480.

to consider them, or to enter into any examination of the intentions of the writer. As Junius truly said, 'In other criminal prosecutions, the malice of the design is confessedly as much a subject of consideration to a jury as the certainty of the fact.' In a trial for homicide, the jury had not to consider only whether the dead man met his death by the hand of the prisoner; they had also to estimate the intentions, motives, and provocations, and to decide whether the act was murder or manslaughter, or neither. It is not easy to see why a different rule should be applied to libels.

It is, however, quite certain that the doctrine as laid down by Mansfield was that of a long succession of the most eminent English lawyers. It was confessedly that of Holt, one of the greatest and most constitutional of judges.[1] Under George II. the question had been raised in the prosecutions which were directed against the 'Craftsman.' Sir Philip Yorke, afterwards the great Lord Hardwicke, while conducting the prosecution, asserted this doctrine in the strongest terms, and though the jury on one occasion refused to give him a verdict, the Chief Justice Raymond fully sanctioned his description of the law.[2] Mansfield himself declared that for fourteen years he had uniformly laid down this doctrine from the Bench without question, and he was

[1] *Parl. Hist.* xvi. 1267.

[2] Campbell's *Lord Chancellors*, vi. 176. It was on occasion of the acquittal of the *Craftsman* that Pulteney wrote his ballad called *The Honest Jury*, with the well-known stanza:

'For Sir Philip well knows
That his innuendoes
Will serve him no longer
In verse or in prose,
For twelve honest men have decided the cause,
Who are judges alike of the facts and the laws.'

Lord Mansfield, in the case of the Dean of Asaph, is said, by a strange lapse of memory, to have stated that Pulteney had admitted that 'libel or no libel' was a question for the Court, by saying in his ballad:

'For twelve honest men have decided the cause,
Who are judges of facts, though not judges of laws.'

supported by the unanimous opinion of the judges who sat with him.[1] The one great authority on the other side, as yet, was Lord Camden, who strenuously, and at every period of his life, maintained that the decision of the whole question belonged legally to the jury. In the last reign, when prosecuting a libel as Attorney-General, he attended so little to the authority of the judges, that in arguing the character of the libel, he turned his back upon them, directing his words exclusively to the jury; and in the House of Lords he made this question especially his own. He had the rare triumph of living to see his doctrine finally established in 1792, and that not by an enacting, but by a declaratory law, which asserted that his version of the law had always been the true one.[2]

To amend or determine the law of libel so as to bring the question of motive and of intention under the jurisdiction of the jury, became one of the great objects of the Whig party, although, as we have seen, they unfortunately differed upon the question whether the law should be made declaratory or enacting. The enacting Bill of Dowdeswell appears to have been chiefly due to Burke, and it was first introduced and defeated in 1771. It may be questioned, however, whether the judicial

---

[1] Campbell's *Chief Justices*, ii. 481, 485.

[2] Campbell's *Chancellors*, vii. 45–47. Thurlow, Bathurst, and Kenyon protested strongly against the measure. Considering the long chain of authorities who agreed with Lord Mansfield, and the scorn which was so abundantly poured on mere laymen who discussed the question on the grounds of common sense, justice, and analogy, it is amusing to read Lord Campbell's commentary upon the Act. 'Now that the mist of prejudice has cleared away, I believe that English lawyers almost unanimously think that Lord Camden's view of the question was correct on strict legal principles; and that the Act was properly made to *declare* the right of the jury to determine upon the character of the alleged libel, instead of *enacting* it as an innovation' (p. 47).

doctrine about libel was not on the whole rather favourable to libellers than the reverse. When the opinion is widely diffused that men in high political or judicial authority are acting partially, oppressively, or illegally, to some particular class of culprits, it will almost always be found that juries take a strong bias in the opposite direction. The Wilkes case and the excessive multiplication of Press trials under Grenville had already done very much to produce such a bias, and the violent discussions on the legal doctrine of libel greatly increased it. In political cases it was scarcely possible to obtain a verdict from a London jury against libellers, and the knowledge of this fact greatly encouraged them.[1]

There was also at this time a great change passing over the Press. In the beginning of the eighteenth century the newspaper was intended for little more than to collect and circulate current news, and to make known the wants of the community by advertisements. Political discussions were conducted in other quarters, by pamphlets, by broadsides, or by periodical papers which were wholly devoted to that purpose. The political papers to which Swift, Addison, Steele, Defoe, and many other writers under Queen Anne contributed, were entirely occupied with party warfare, and made no pretensions to fulfil the functions of regular newspapers. 'Cato's Letters,' which appeared under George I. at the time of the South Sea Bubble, and which were written by Trenchard and Gordon; the 'Craftsman,' in which Bolingbroke, Pulteney, and Amhurst assailed during many years the Government of Walpole; the 'North Briton,' which was the chief organ of opposition in the beginning of the reign of George III., were all of the same nature. It was, however, inevitable that

[1] See some acute observations on this point in the *Annual Register*, 1771, p. 60.

these two classes of periodicals should be eventually amalgamated, and that the amalgamation should greatly add to the importance of each. An editor who combined in a single paper the interest derived from the circulation of news and the interest derived from political discussions, and who selected and recorded in his columns the facts upon which he based his political disquisitions, had a manifest advantage over his neighbours. The political element may, it is true, be sometimes, though rarely, found in the newspapers of the Revolution; it became more prominent in the reign of Anne,[1] but until the reign of George III. most of the political writing which exercised a powerful influence upon opinion had no connection with the newspaper press.

In the first decade of George III., however, the character of newspapers was gradually changing. Horace Walpole has noticed that before this time political abuse was generally confined to Saturday essays, but that about 1768 the daily and evening newspapers, stimulated by the example of Wilkes, had begun to print every outrageous libel that was sent to them.[2] The great development of magazines and newspapers put an end to or absorbed that literature of detached, periodical essays, which during three reigns had been so considerable. It was a significant thing that while the 'Rambler' and the 'Adventurer' were published in a separate form like the 'Spectator' and the 'Tatler,' Dr. Johnson published the 'Idler' every Saturday in a newspaper called the 'Universal Chronicle,' and he complained bitterly that his essays were immediately reproduced by rival papers. Goldsmith's 'Citizen of the World' first appeared in the columns of the 'Public Ledger.' In the same way the

[1] Hallam's *Hist. of England*, ch. xvi.

[2] Walpole's *Memoirs of George III.* iii. 164, 165.

best political writing began gradually to find its way into the newspapers.[1]

Newspaper political controversy was then entirely different from what it now is. The leading article in which a modern newspaper asserts its own views with a prominence of type and of position that adds not a little to their authority, had not yet appeared. As a regular feature of newspapers it cannot, I believe, be traced farther back than the French Revolution.[2] The political bias was shown in scattered comments, in a partial and significant selection of news, and especially in letters, written, for the most part, under assumed names. The importance and amount of this correspondence had of late years greatly increased, and in the beginning of 1769 a writer appeared who soon riveted the attention of England, and whose letters have become a classic in English literature.

Under many other signatures Junius had for some time been before the public. He himself asserted that nearly everything that had attracted attention for more than two years before the appearance of the first letters under that name was from his pen, and two of the signatures he has specifically recognised as his own.[3] Whether all the miscellaneous letters which were published by Woodfall are rightly attributed to him may, however, be doubted.[4] Though containing occasional passages of weighty invective and of brilliant epigram,

---

[1] This change is noticed in Miller's *Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century*, iii. 93. On the absorption of the old essay writing by newspapers, see Timperley's *Encyclopedia of Literary Anecdote*, p. 702.

[2] Andrews' *History of British Journals*, i. 274. Grant's *History of the Newspaper Press*, i. 430, 431.

[3] See his anonymous letter to G. Grenville, *Grenville Papers*, iv. 381, dated October 20, 1768. See, too, pp. 355, 356.

[4] See the elaborate argument against the genuineness of these letters in Dilke's *Papers of a Critic*.

these early letters are, I think, of very little value, and it was only by slow degrees that the writer learnt the secret of true dignity of style, and exchanged the tone of simple scurrility for that measured malignity of slander in which he afterwards excelled. The first letter under the signature of Junius appeared on November 21, 1768, but it was of no considerable importance, and was not republished in the collection of letters that was authorised by the writer. On January 21, 1769, a much abler and more elaborate letter appeared under the same signature, reviewing the whole political condition of the country, and attacking with great virulence the Duke of Grafton, Lord North, Lord Hillsborough, Lord Weymouth, Lord Granby, and Lord Mansfield. In an evil hour Sir William Draper, the distinguished officer who had commanded the expedition which captured the Manilla Islands, entered the lists on behalf of the Commander-in-Chief. The appearance in the field of an officer of such high position and well-known reputation, and the great literary superiority of his opponent, attracted attention to the controversy, while the extraordinary fierceness and ability with which the unknown writer in the succeeding letters assailed the Sovereign and the foremost ministers of the Crown, soon moved public curiosity to the highest point. The interest in them is not to be fairly measured by the increase of the circulation of the 'Public Advertiser,' in which they appeared, for they were copied into many other papers. They were imitated by almost every public writer, and even by a large number of the most eminent speakers. The excitement culminated in the letter to the King which was published on December 19, 1769, but the letters under the signature of Junius continued, with occasional intermissions, till January 21, 1772.

They appeared at a time which was pre-eminently

favourable to their success. The Chatham Ministry, on which so many hopes had been built, had been paralysed by the illness of its chief, and a period of administrative anarchy had ensued such as England had rarely witnessed. Chatham at last resigned, and soon after returned full of indignation to public life, to find every principle of his policy abandoned by his former colleagues. Wherever the eye was turned, the political horizon was darkly clouded. In the American colonies the flood of discontent rose higher and higher. Abroad, England was humiliated by the refusal of Spain to pay the Manilla ransom, by the acquisition of Corsica by the French, and soon after by the expulsion of the English from the Falkland Islands. At home, the encroachments on the rights of electors had raised popular indignation almost to the point of revolution. Blood had been shed; Parliament and the law courts were alike discredited, and the popularity of the Sovereign was gone. The ministers were strong in their purchased majorities, but they were divided among themselves, without credit or popularity in the country, and for the most part notoriously destitute of administrative capacity. A misgovernment relieved by no gleam of success at home or abroad, and equally fatal to constitutional liberty and to imperial greatness, had reduced the nation which had lately been the arbiter of Europe to a condition of the most humiliating, the most disgraceful impotence. The Press and the jury-box alone remained for opposition. The former, which was looked upon as the one still unfettered organ of opinion, was becoming more and more powerful, and Burke noticed as a special characteristic of the time the favour with which the public looked upon the most ferocious libels.[1] The classes from which the London

[1] *Cavendish Debates*, ii. 106.

juries were drawn fully shared the feeling, and the belief that the judges were illegally endeavouring in Press cases to abridge the authority of juries had irritated them to the highest point.

In order to understand fully the success of Junius, in order to judge fairly the intense virulence which he imported into political controversy, these things must be duly weighed. He had abilities that would command admiration at any time, but at this period everything seemed conspiring in his favour. The mystery that surrounded him added to the effect. As he wrote to Wilkes: 'At present there is something oracular in the delivery of my opinions. I speak from a recess which no human curiosity can penetrate; and darkness, we are told, is one source of the sublime. The mystery of Junius increases his importance.'

The merit of Junius is almost exclusively literary. His letters contain no original views, no large generalisations, no proofs of political prescience, no great depth or power of thought. He was in no respect before his age, and, unlike Burke, who delighted in arguing questions upon the highest grounds, Junius usually dealt with them mainly in their personal aspects. On the great question of American taxation he avowed himself the partisan of Grenville, and bitterly lamented the repeal of the Stamp Act. On the question of parliamentary reform he maintained the wholly untenable positions that a nomination borough is of the nature of a freehold, that the whole Legislature is incompetent to abolish it, and that the question of parliamentary reform should be decided by the Commons alone. Considering the letters merely in their literary aspect, it must be acknowledged that they are very unequal in their merits. They are sometimes stilted, always too manifestly artifical, and not unfrequently overcharged with epigram and antithesis. They have, however, literary merits of

the highest order, and their style is entirely different from that of any of the great models of the time. It bears no resemblance to the style of Swift, of Addison, of Bolingbroke, of Johnson, or of Burke, yet in some respects it is not inferior to any of these. No writer ever excelled Junius in condensed and virulent invective, rendered all the more malignant by the studied and controlled deliberation of the language, in envenomed and highly elaborated sarcasm, in clear and vivid statement; in the art of assuming, though an unknown individual, an attitude of great moral and political superiority; in the art of evading difficulties, insinuating unproved charges, imputing unworthy motives. His letters are perfectly adapted to the purposes for which they were intended. There is nothing in them superfluous or obscure, and nothing that fails to tell. He had to the highest degree the gift of saying things that are remembered, and his epigrams are often barbed with the keenest wit. Like most writing which is at once very good and very laboured, Junius appears to most advantage in quotation. Read continuously, there is a certain monotony of glitter and of rhythm, but passages embedded in the style of another writer seldom fail to shine with the brilliancy of a diamond. Very happy metaphors and phrases of high imaginative beauty may be found in his pages. His rare eulogies are usually intended for the injury of some third person, but the few lines which, in his letter against Horne, he devotes to the praise of Chatham, though their central image is by no means irreproachable,[1] have all that peculiar charm, beyond analysis or definition, which belongs only to the very best writing. As a popular political reasoner

[1] 'Recorded honours shall gather round his monument and thicken over him. It is a solid fabric, and will support the laurels that adorn it.' It is no great eulogy of a monument that it is not crushed by laurel wreaths.

he was truly admirable. Though he introduced little or nothing new or original into controversy, he possessed to supreme perfection the art of giving the arguments on his side their simplest, clearest, and strongest expression; disengaging them from all extraneous matter, making them transparently evident to the most cursory reader. In this, as in most other respects, he is a curious contrast to Burke, who is always redundant, and who delights in episodes, illustrations, ramifications, general reflections, various lights, remote and indirect consequences. Junius never for a moment loses sight of the immediate issue, and he flies swift and direct as an arrow to its heart. The rapid march of the eighteenth century is apparent in his style, and it is admirably suited for a class of literature which, if it impresses at all, must impress at a glance.

He possessed the easy air of good society, and his letters, if not those of a great statesman, are at least unquestionably those of a man who had a real and experimental knowledge of public business, who had mixed with active politicians, who knew the anecdotes which circulated in political society. In the present century the great development of parliamentary reporting, and of a Press which is largely written by men who are closely connected with political life, has brought the public into very intimate contact with their rulers, and has diffused the habits of political thought over a wide area. Yet, even now, a few nights spent in the gallery of the House of Commons, and some free social intercourse with political leaders of different parties, will teach much to the most careful student of written politics. But in the eighteenth century the chasm between the mere literary politician and the practical statesman was much wider, and even so great a man as Dr. Johnson altogether failed to bridge it. The letters of Junius are eminently the writings of a man who understood the

conditions of public life and the characters of public men—who wrote not simply for public applause or for the gratification of private spite, but for the attainment of definite political ends. He showed an intimate acquaintance with the business and with the staff of the War Office, and much knowledge of the characters and positions of the City politicians. He had a clear view of the distinction between what is practically attainable and what is simply desirable, and of the frequent necessity of waiving general principles for the attainment of definite ends. No one can read his letters to Wilkes without being struck with the eminently practical cast of his judgment—with the rare political sagacity with which he could judge an immediate issue. On broad political questions his judgments, as I have said, are very worthless, but they are at least not those of a mere demagogue. I have already referred to his opinions about American taxation and about nomination boroughs. It may be added that he objected strongly to giving members to the great trading towns; that, while advocating triennial, he opposed annual Parliaments; that he supported against the City politicians the legality of Press warrants; that, in spite of his furious hatred of the King, he argued strongly for the superiority of monarchical over republican government. He received no money for his writings, and could have no selfish object to gain, while he had grave dangers to fear. There is little doubt that he had some real public spirit, and a very sincere desire to drag down men whose public lives were scandalously bad. He was evidently one of those men to whose nature hatred is an imperious necessity, and who, without any personal provocation or private interest, are only too glad to gratify it.

It is true that this is not always the character of his writing. No plausible explanation based on mere public grounds has been given of the ungovernable, the almost

frantic fury with which, in the spring of 1772, chiefly under the signature of Veteran, and with earnest injunctions to Woodfall to conceal the identity of that signature with Junius,[1] he inveighed against an obscure change at the War Office, which led to the removal of D'Oyly, to the resignation of his brother clerk, Philip Francis, and to the appointment by Lord Barrington of Chamier to the higher post of Deputy Secretary at War. Barrington, though he was one of the most conspicuous of the King's friends, had hitherto been barely mentioned in the attacks of Junius. He is now 'the bloody Barrington, that silken, fawning courtier at St. James's,' whose 'very name' 'implies everything that is mean, cruel, false, and contemptible,' 'a wretch,' 'who wants nothing in his office but ignorance, impudence, pertness, and servility,' next to the Duke of Grafton, 'the blackest heart in the kingdom.' Chamier is assailed in letter after letter in a strain of the coarsest and most vulgar insolence. This gentleman, who was descended from a distinguished refugee French minister, was already, at the time of his appointment, one of the ten original members of Dr. Johnson's famous club, and he appears to have been a man of much more than ordinary acquirements, and of a perfectly stainless character and reputation. The sole definite charge indeed which Veteran could bring against him was that in his youth he had been on the Stock Exchange, and this very innocent fact is the chief theme of the witticisms of his assailant. He describes him with wearisome iteration as 'Tony Shammy,' 'a little gambling broker,' 'a little Three per Cent. Reduced,' 'a mere scrip of a Secretary,' 'with the activity of a broker and the politeness of a hairdresser,' 'a little Frenchified broker from Change Alley.' It is probable that all this was due to the meanest personal

[1] See Woodfall, i. 247, 248.

motives, and if Philip Francis was indeed the writer it is very explicable.

Even apart from its moral aspects, the outrageous violence of his language was a grave literary fault. We find in Junius nothing of that relief and variety of colouring, that delicacy of touch, that measured and discriminating severity which has made the immortal letters of Pascal permanent models in controversy. Junius probably never drew a portrait which even approximated to truth. His enemies are all villains of the deepest dye, and his chief task is to diversify and intensify the epithets of hatred. Thus, to give but a few examples, the Sovereign is called by implication 'the basest and meanest fellow in the kingdom.' His mother is 'the demon of discord,' 'the original creating cause of the shameful and deplorable condition of this country,' a being 'who watches with a kind of providential malignity over the work of her hands.'[1] The Duke of Grafton is 'a black and cowardly tyrant,' 'degraded below the condition of a man,' 'who had passed through every possible change and contradiction of conduct, without the momentary imputation or colour of a virtue,' 'the friend of every villain in the kingdom,' though at the same time 'there is not a man in either House, whose character, however flagitious, would not be ruined by mixing with his reputation.' The Duke of Bedford is described as destitute of all natural affection, as having sold his country for money to France, as hated with equal intensity though on different grounds by every honest Englishman and by every honest Scotchman, as having hitherto escaped by a special providence from the detestation of the populace

[1] The passages about the Princess Dowager are from the letters signed Domitian, but Junius in one of his private letters acknowledged that signature. The other passages I have quoted are from the letters signed Junius.

in order that he might be reserved for the public justice of his country. Lord Mansfield is declared, 'with the most solemn appeal to God,' to be 'the very worst and most dangerous man in the kingdom.' 'The whole race of the Conways' are 'the meanest of the human species.' Colonel Luttrell 'had discovered a new line in the human character. He has degraded even the name of Luttrell.' Horne is actuated by 'the solitary vindictive malice of a monk brooding over the infirmities of his friend . . . and feasting with a rancorous rapture upon the sordid catalogue of his distresses.' Garrick, who was suspected of the unpardonable crime of having taken some pains to discover the authorship of these letters, was 'a rascal' and a 'vagabond.'

The malignity of Junius was indeed truly fiendish, and it was utterly uncurbed by any restraints of truth, or decency, or honour. In few writers is a delight in the contemplation and infliction of pain more keen and more evident, and he has a peculiar pleasure in directing his sarcasms to those circumstances or moments of private sorrow which are sacred to every honourable disputant. When the Princess Dowager was dying of cancer we find him gloating over her condition, and upon the loathsome remedy that was employed to alleviate her suffering.[1] He taunted the King with the

[1] An atrocious note which Woodfall refused to print has been given for the first time by Mr. Twisleton in his great work on the handwriting of Junius, plate 103. In the text of a letter, Junius had written: 'When all hopes of peace are lost, his Majesty tells his Parliament that he is preparing, not for barbarous war, but (with all his mother's softness) *for a different situation*;' and he adds, as a note, 'The lady herself is now preparing for a different situation. Nothing keeps her alive but the horrible suction of toads. Such an instance of divine justice would convert an atheist.' On this remedy, which was supposed in the 18th century to be useful in cases of cancer, see Twisleton, p. xxv, and compare one of the private letters of Junius to Woodfall: 'What do you mean by affirming that the Dowager is

imputed frailty of his mother and with the undutiful conduct of his child. He jested with the Duke of Grafton on the infidelity of his wife. In his correspondence with the Duke of Bedford he points with savage pleasure to the death of his only son, and because the Duke had shortly after that event voted on an important public question he falsely and basely charged him with the want of all natural affection.[1] Even his own gallery of monsters scarcely contains a more unlovely picture than that which Junius has unconsciously drawn of himself. We see him full of the most nervous alarm at the prospect of detection, and at the dangers that menaced him,[2] but at the same time thrilling with a keen and undisguised enjoyment at the thought of the pain he was inflicting. At one time he advises Wilkes

better? I tell you she suckles toads from morning to night.'—Woodfall's *Junius*, i. 241. In a letter signed Domitian, Junius wrote: 'Few nations are in the predicament that we are, to have nothing to complain of but the filial virtues of our Sovereign. Charles I. had the same implicit attachment to his spouse, but his worthy parent was in her grave. It were to be wished that the parallel held good in all the circumstances.'

[1] The infamous falsehoods of Junius about the Duke of Bedford are fully exposed in Lord Brougham's *Statesmen of George III.* art. 'Bedford,' and in Lord J. Russell's Introduction to the third volume of the *Bedford Correspondence*. Among other charges the Duke and Duchess were accused of having sold the clothes and trinkets of their son. The truth was that 'these effects were given, as was the practice, to the immediate servants of Lord and Lady Tavistock, and sold by them for their own benefit.' Bedford's despair at the death of his son was such that, as Hume said, 'nobody believed when it happened that he would have survived the loss.'

[2] 'I must be more cautious than ever. I am sure I should not survive a discovery three days, or if I did they would attaint me by bill. Change to the Somerset Coffee House, and let no mortal know the alteration. I am persuaded you are too honest a man to contribute in any way to my destruction.'—Woodfall's *Junius*, i. 231, 232. 'When you consider to what excessive enmities I may be exposed, you will not wonder at my cautions.' Ibid. i. 208. 'Though you would fight,' he wrote to Draper, 'there are others who would assassinate.'

about the course of conduct 'which will in the end break the heart of Mr. Horne.' At another he announces his intention, 'having nothing better to do,' to entertain himself and the public with 'torturing Lord Barrington.' The Duke of Grafton he describes by an expressive image of satisfaction as, 'the pillow upon which I am determined to rest all my resentments.' 'Our language,' he writes to Lord Mansfield, 'has no term of reproach, the mind has no idea of detestation, which has not already been happily applied to you and exhausted. Ample justice has been done by abler pens than mine to the separate merits of your life and character. Let it be my humble office to collect the scattered sweets till their united virtue tortures the sense.' He has a manifest pleasure in dragging women into his letters, and he is perfectly regardless of truth if he can only wound an opponent. Thus without a shadow of evidence he accused the Duke of Bedford of having been bribed by the French to sign the Peace of Paris. A certain Dr. Musgrave had, it is true, brought a similar accusation against the Princess Dowager, Lord Bute, and Lord Holland, but Bedford was not included in the charge, which rested only on the gossip of a coffee house, and which was afterwards unanimously voted by the House of Commons to be frivolous and untrue. Sir W. Draper challenged Junius to produce the evidence of his charge. But the effrontery of the slanderer was quite unshaken. He answered that a bribe had under similar circumstances been offered to Marlborough, and 'only not accepted,' that he judged the proceedings of Bedford by internal evidence, and that 'a religious man might have remembered upon what foundation some truths most interesting to mankind have been received and established. If it were not for the internal evidence which the purest of religions carries with it, what would become of the

Decalogue and of Christianity?' In a letter under the signature of Vindex, which Woodfall refused to print as a whole, he accused the King of cowardice. The charge was without truth and without plausibility, for both in moral and in physical courage George III. considerably exceeded the high average of English gentlemen. But a private letter to Woodfall abundantly explains the motives of the attack. 'I must tell you (and with positive certainty) that our gracious * * * * is as callous as a stockfish to everything but the reproach of cowardice. That alone is able to set the humours afloat. After a paper of that kind he won't eat meat for a week.'[1]

The hatred with which Junius regarded the ministers of the King, violent as it was, paled before that with which he regarded their master. 'It lowers me to myself,' he wrote to Wilkes, 'to draw another into a hazardous situation which I cannot partake of with him. This consideration will account for my abstaining from the King so long. . . . I know my ground thoroughly when I affirm that *he alone* is the mark. It is not Bute nor even the Princess Dowager. It is the odious hypocrite himself whom every honest man should detest and every brave man should attack.'[2] He watched with keen delight the domestic sorrows that wrung his heart, and was always ready to pour fresh poison into the wound. 'Since my note of this morning,' he wrote privately to Wilkes, 'I know for certain that the Duke of Cumber-

---

[1] Woodfall's *Junius*, i. 221. Compare George Grenville's Journal of May 1765, written at the time of the silk weaver riots. 'Mr. Grenville went in next. The King spoke to him first upon the state of the rioters. He seemed in great disorder and agitation; hurt with people thinking he had kept out of the way from fear, said he would put himself at the head of his army or do anything to save his country.' —*Grenville Papers*, iii. 177.

[2] Junius to Wilkes, Oct. 21, 1771. Wilkes' MSS. British Museum. Woodfall, in his published edition, suppressed part of this letter.

land is married to Luttrell's sister. The Princess Dowager and the Duke of Gloucester cannot live, and the odious hypocrite is *in profundis*. Now is your time to torment him with some demonstration from the City. Suppose an address from some proper number of Liverymen to the Mayor for a common hall to consider of an address of congratulation—then have it debated in Common Council—think of something—you see you need not appear yourself.'[1]

The great success of Junius is a striking proof of the low condition of the political writing of the time, of the partiality of juries, and of the exasperated state of public opinion. Among its minor causes was a well-known passage in one of the speeches of Burke, in which for party purposes that great orator not a little exaggerated his merits. It must be remembered too that contemporary writers did not possess the knowledge of Junius derived from his private letters, which both furnish many clues to his character and enable us to trace to him many most discreditable letters published under other signatures. A reader who knows Junius as we know him now, must indeed have an extraordinary estimate of the value of a brilliant style if he can regard him with the smallest respect. He wisely attacked for the most part men whose rank and position prevented them from descending into the arena, and who were at the same time intensely and often deservedly unpopular. His encounter with Horne was the one instance in which he met a really able and practised writer; and Horne, though his own character was a very vulnerable one, appears to me to have had in this controversy a great advantage over his opponent. There was indeed something strangely imprudent, as well as strangely impudent, in an anonymous newspaper libeller assuring a

[1] Junius to Wilkes. This letter was received Nov. 7, 1771.

skilful controversialist that 'he could not descend with him to an altercation in the newspapers,' and that for his part 'he measured the integrity of men by their conduct and not by their professions.' The great literary superiority of Junius to Sir W. Draper is incontestable, but the most important charge which he urged against that officer has no real weight. Draper, who had commanded the expedition against the Manilla Islands, and who would have been entitled to no less than 25,000*l.* out of the ransom money which the Spaniards refused to pay, had repeatedly urged upon the Government the duty of prosecuting the claim. At last, when it was plainly useless, he desisted, and he soon after obtained some professional advancement to which his past services amply entitled him. A skilful writer might represent this as the conduct of a man who had betrayed and sold his 'companions at arms for a riband and a regiment,' but there was nothing in it which was not compatible with the most scrupulous honour. The elaborate legal arguments of Junius against Lord Mansfield for admitting a felon named Eyre to bail, and on account of his directions to the jury in an obscure trespass case, are pronounced by lawyers to be so grossly wrong that they are sufficient to prove that the writer cannot have been of their profession.[1] The detailed charge of peculation against the Duke of Grafton about the oaks in Whittlebury forest appears to have been equally false.[2] On the great constitutional questions of the day Junius did little more than reproduce common arguments with much more than common ability, and with the exception of the abandonment of the Falkland Islands,[3] no foreign

[1] See Campbell's *Life of Mansfield*. Brougham's *Statesmen of George III.* art. 'Mansfield.'

[2] See Almon's *Biographical Anecdotes*, i. 12–15.

[3] In a letter to Mackrabie, Philip Francis writes: 'The approach of a war loads me with business, as by-and-by I hope it will with money' (Dec. 11, 1770); and in his autobiography he says:

question is treated by him with any prominence. He is far more at home in dilating upon such subjects as the Scotch birth of Mansfield, the connection of his family with the Pretender, the matrimonial infelicities and amatory vagaries of Grafton, the descent of that nobleman from an illegitimate son of Charles II., the parsimony of Bedford, his conduct on the death of his son, and an assault which was made upon him on a country racecourse.[1]

For nearly a year under the signature of Junius he continued his libels entirely without restraint; but when the letter to the King appeared, the Attorney-General very properly prosecuted Woodfall who had published it, and Almon and Miller who had reprinted it. The trial of Almon took place first, and he was ultimately found guilty of publishing, and sentenced to pay a fine of ten marks and to find sureties for his good behaviour for two years. Woodfall, who was the chief offender, was next arraigned, and Mansfield, who tried the case, laid down very clearly his doctrine that the libellous character of the document was for the judge and not the jury. The jury responded by a special and irregular verdict of 'guilty of printing and publishing only.' After long discussion it was ordered that this verdict should be set aside, and that there should be a new trial. But before this decision was carried into effect, Miller had been tried at Guildhall, and in spite of the clearest evidence of the republication he was acquitted amid the enthusiastic applause of a great multitude. The temper

---

'We thought a Spanish war inevitable, and that Chatham must be employed. Lord Weymouth on that conviction resigned the Secretary of State's office, and I lost 500*l.* in the Stocks.'—Parkes and Merivale's *Life of Francis*, i. 251, 363.

[1] In one of his private letters he begged Woodfall to find out the exact day on which this important event took place.—Woodfall, i. 227, 578.

of the London juries was sufficiently evident, and no attempt was made to renew the prosecution of Woodfall.[1] Mansfield refused to permit the prosecution of the scandalous libels against himself, and Grafton and Bedford took the same course. The torrent of libel flowed on unchecked and unrestrained, and the writings of Junius became for some time the favourite model of political writers, who, though they could not rival him in ability, often equalled and sometimes even exceeded him in scurrility and falsehood.

The writings of Junius have a great importance in the history of the growing influence of newspapers, and they perhaps contributed something to the resignation of Grafton. They have, however, very little permanent value, and would probably have been almost forgotten, had it not been for the problem of their authorship, which appears to possess to some minds an inexhaustible attraction. Burke, Gerard Hamilton, Boyd, and Dunning seem to have been most suspected at the time, and answers were even published addressed to 'Junius, *alias* Edmund, the Jesuit of St. Omer's.'[2] The publication, however, by Woodfall of the private and miscellaneous letters of Junius, greatly changed the conditions of the inquiry; and the very elaborate work of Taylor,

---

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 35, 36. Campbell's *Chief Justices*, ii. 476–480.

[2] This, e.g., was the address of a very able letter signed Zeno in defence of Mansfield.—*Public Advertiser*, Oct. 15, 1771. Burke complained bitterly that Lord Mansfield 'had not thought proper to discountenance the blending a vindication of his character with the most scurrilous attacks upon mine; and that he has permitted the first regular defence that I have ever seen made for him to be addressed to me, without the least proof, presumption, or ground for the slightest suspicion that I had any share whatsoever in that controversy.'—*Burke's Correspondence*, i. 270, 271. He again and again distinctly and upon his honour denied that he was the author of Junius.—Ibid. pp. 275, 282. Boswell's *Johnson*, p. 625.

identifying Junius with Philip Francis,[1] gave a renewed impulse to the discussion. Probably no English book, except the plays of Shakespeare, has been submitted to such a minute and exhaustive criticism as the 'Letters of Junius;' and although the sufficiency of the evidence tracing them to Francis is still much disputed, it may, I think, be truly said that rival candidates have almost disappeared from the field. I do not propose to examine in detail a question on which I have nothing new to offer, and which appears to me to have already occupied much more attention than it deserves; but a brief abstract of the arguments in favour of the claim of Francis can in a work like the present hardly be avoided.

The great and evident knowledge shown by the anonymous writer, of the business and of the officials of the War Office; his furious resentment at the appointment of Chamier, which was in no respect either improper or important, but which was followed by the resignation of Francis; his adoption, while expressing that resentment, of other signatures; and his anxiety to disconnect his letters on this subject from the letters of Junius, as if he feared that they might furnish a clue to the authorship of the latter, first directed suspicion to the former chief clerk of the War Office; and a great number of independent lines of evidence converge to the same conclusion. The handwriting of Junius has been submitted to the most minute, patient, and elaborate examination by one of the first professional authorities on the subject, and has been confidently pronounced by him to be the disguised handwriting of Francis, and the argument is greatly strengthened by the fact that Francis had once sent a copy of verses, with an anonymous note in a dis-

[1] *Junius Identified with a Distinguished Living Character.* (London, 1816.)

guised hand, to a young lady at Bath, and this disguised writing appears identical with that of Junius.[1] The movements of Francis during the Junian period have been minutely traced, and the periods of his absence from London and of his illness have been found to correspond with striking accuracy to the periods in which the letters of Junius were suspended.[2] Junius mentions some speeches of Chatham which he had himself heard, and adopts or imitates several of their phrases. The same speeches were actually published from notes that were taken by Francis.[3] Among the miscellaneous letters is one under the signature of 'Trifrons,' in which the author mentions casually that he had seen the works of the Jesuit Casuists burned at Paris. This event took place in August 1761; and as the war was raging, the only British subjects who could have seen the transaction were either prisoners of war or those who were attached to the suite of Hans Stanley, who was then in

[1] See Twisleton and Chabot's *Handwriting of Junius* — probably the most complete investigation ever made into the handwriting of an author. The facts relating to the copy of verses will be found, pp. 219–244. The verses seem to be in the handwriting of Tilghman, the cousin and intimate friend of Francis.

[2] Parkes and Merivale's *Life of Francis*.

[3] This fact rests on the distinct assertion of Francis and of the Editor of the *Parl. Hist.* in which the reports appeared. See Stanhope's *History of England*, v. pp. xxxiv, xxxvi. Taylor's *Junius Identified*, pp. 257–313. It was once believed that the reports of those speeches did not appear till long after the letters of Junius. Dilke, however, who has examined the Junius question with great minuteness, has shown that reports may be found in the earlier newspapers. (*Papers of a Critic*, ii. 109–121.) This no doubt weakens the argument from the coincidence of expression, but it leaves the fact that Francis heard and took notes of speeches which Junius heard and imitated. Mr. Leslie Stephen has recently examined this subject with great care (*Historical Review*, April 1888, pp. 233–249), and he appears to me to have shown conclusively that Francis's report of one of Chatham's speeches had not been printed when Junius wrote, and that, notwithstanding this fact, it is almost certain that Junius must have seen it.

Paris negotiating for peace. Francis was at this time Assistant Treasury Clerk to Pitt at the Foreign Office. He had shortly before been sent to Portugal on the mission of Lord Kinnoul. He was especially recommended for the Foreign Office on account of his perfect knowledge of French; and if it could be proved that he was one of the few persons despatched with, or to, Hans Stanley, this fact would go far towards settling the controversy. Unfortunately, no evidence which is at all decisive has been produced. Lady Francis, who was extremely inaccurate and untrustworthy in her recollections, stated indeed that 'her husband was at the Court of France when Madame de Pompadour drove out the Jesuits;' and that he 'allowed to his family that he had seen the Jesuit books burnt by the hangman.' A letter from a lady with whom Francis was in love proves that when the mission of Hans Stanley was organised, Francis had asked to accompany it as secretary, but had not obtained the post; and it has been noticed that no despatches in the handwriting of Francis exist between July 24 and August 20, 1761. This interval would give ample time for a journey to Paris and back, and it was during this time that the Jesuit books were burnt. But although it has never been proved that Francis was at this time in Paris, it is certain that the letters of Hans Stanley to Pitt passed through his hands, and it is a remarkable fact that one of those letters gives a detailed account of the burning of the Jesuit books.[1]

Evidence of another kind tends not less clearly to identify Francis with Junius. Junius maintains the somewhat unusual combination of Court opinions on

[1] This argument was, I believe, first brought forward in an admirable essay in Herman Merivale's *Historical Studies*—a book of great interest and beauty. See, too, Parkes and Merivale's *Life of Francis*, i. 192–196.

the subject of American taxation with popular opinions about the Middlesex election. Francis on both points agreed with him.[1] The character of Francis and the apparent character of Junius were strikingly similar. Mixed with some real public spirit, we find in both the same disposition to carry into political warfare the most rancorous, inveterate, and ungovernable personal hatred, the same vein of profaneness and coarseness,[2] the same passion for concealment and disguise. Francis from very early years was an anonymous writer in the press, and it is certain that in the period immediately preceding the Junius Letters he made Woodfall's 'Public Advertiser' one of the receptacles of his productions.[3] As he had been in both the Foreign Office and the War

---

[1] Francis, in a speech made in 1796, said that on the American question he adopted 'the principles and the language of Lord Chatham,' and rejoiced that America had resisted. This has been urged as a strong argument against the Franciscan theory (*Grenville Papers*, iii. p. xx), but it has been completely overthrown by the *Life of Francis*, which proves that at the time when the letters of Junius appeared, Francis, like Junius, adopted the views of Grenville, though he appears to have abandoned them as early as 1776. In a letter written from India in that year to his friend D'Oyly, he speaks strongly of the folly of carrying on the war against America, and adds, 'There was a time when I could reason as logically and passionately as anybody against the Americans, but since I have been obliged to study the book of wisdom, I have dismissed logic out of my library.' —Parkes and Merivale, i. 104–108, 250.

[2] The great coarseness with which Junius writes about women has been often noticed, and it gave rise to a very characteristic incident. A letter appeared in the *Public Advertiser* in September 1769, directed against Junius and signed Junia. Junius at once answered in a tone of coarse raillery, urging that 'since Junia has adopted my name, she cannot in common matrimonial decency refuse to make me a tender of her person,' &c. Two or three days later, it struck him that this letter was 'idle and improper,' so he wrote to Woodfall to insert a paragraph to the effect that he had 'some reason to suspect that the last letter signed Junius in this paper was not written by the real Junius.'—Woodfall's *Junius*, i. 199; iii. 218, 219.

[3] Parkes and Merivale, i. 211, 212.

Office, and was on intimate terms with Calcraft, who was one of the closest advisers of Pitt, he had access to means of information denied to the outer world. His intellectual qualities, like his moral qualities, bore a manifest resemblance to those of Junius. He was one of the most fastidious and accurate masters of English in his time,[1] and was even called by Burke 'the prince of pamphleteers.'[2] His style, like that of Junius, was terse, vivid, and incisive, abounding in sarcasm and in invective, full of energy and brilliancy. He had the peculiar gift of directness, which was so conspicuous in Junius. 'Few men,' said Fox of him, 'say so much in so few words.' 'Ay, sir,' rejoined Burke; 'his style has no gummy flesh about it.'[3] A great part of his undoubted writing appears to me fully equal to the bulk of Junius, and much superior to the miscellaneous letters, though it perhaps never rises to the excellence of the best passages in the former. If Francis was not Junius, few critics will deny that he was one of the best of his imitators. He was still alive when the volume of Taylor was published, and his conduct with reference to it was very remarkable. A few words of direct denial would have gone a long way towards silencing inquiry; but if Francis ever appeared to deny the authorship, it was always in terms that were carefully equivocal. His first gift to his wife after his second marriage was an edition of Junius; and he left her as a posthumous present, a copy of 'Junius Identified,' which was found sealed up and directed to her in his bureau. It can hardly be doubted from his whole conduct, that he desired, without committing himself to any positive assertion, to convey to her mind that he was the author of 'Junius.' Many men might have amused themselves

[1] See Lord Brougham's sketch of Francis in his *Statesmen of George III.*

[2] Parkes and Merivale, ii. 206.

[3] Ibid. ii. 257.

with giving their wives falsely such an impression during their lifetime; few would have taken measures to prolong the comedy after their death.[1]

No one of these considerations can, I think, be regarded as absolutely conclusive; but their combined force is very great. Some others of minor importance have been adduced. Such are, the numerous peculiarities of phrase or spelling that have been found in both Francis and Junius; the apparent regard and even tenderness of Junius for Woodfall, who had been a schoolfellow of Francis, and his anxious inquiry whether he did not suspect the authorship; the very curious excisions in the fragmentary autobiography of Francis, which seem as though the author were anxiously endeavouring to erase every clue to some great secret. It has been noticed that Junius never attacked Lord Holland, who had been so closely connected with Bute, and who was one of the most unpopular men in England. In one of his private letters he said, 'I wish Lord Holland may acquit himself with honour.' In another letter he speaks of himself as having 'designedly spared Lord Holland and his family;' and this forbearance has been explained by the fact that the father of Francis was domestic chaplain to Lord Holland, and that Philip Francis obtained his first appointment by his influence. Too much stress, however, appears to me to have been laid on this argument, for Holland had retired from active politics before Junius began to write. Francis, if he was indeed Junius, had certainly no hesitation in attacking his benefactors; and the autobiography of Francis shows that before the appearance of the Letters of Junius both father and son resented bitterly what they considered the inadequacy of the rewards they had

[1] See the curious letter of Lady Francis to Lord Campbell, in Campbell's *Chancellors*, viii. 211–214; and a few additional reminiscences of Lady Francis in Parkes and Merivale.

received from Lord Holland.[1] Another common argument, which is, I think, absolutely worthless, is derived from the fact that Francis was by birth and parentage an Irishman. The interest and sympathy which Junius showed in Irish affairs, and also a few expressions which are of Irish origin, have been assumed to point to an Irish writer.[2] Francis may have derived these expressions from his father, who had lived long in Ireland; but he himself left his native country when he was not ten years old, and did not revisit it till long after the period of the letters of Junius.

Still the cumulative weight of the evidence pointing to Francis is extremely great, though it is, perhaps, too much to say that it places the case beyond all reasonable doubt. His life has been minutely investigated without discovering a single fact which is absolutely incompatible with his claim, while the most decisive evidence can be adduced against the chief rival claimants who have been named. All legal authorities seem agreed that Junius was not a lawyer; and if this be true, one large class of

[1] Parkes and Merivale, i. 360, 361. Hayward's *More about Junius*.

[2] The most remarkable is his employment of the term 'collegian,' which is used at Dublin University (where Dr. Francis received his education). A few other expressions have been collected in Prior's *Life of Burke*, and in Coventry's *Junius*, but they are not very decisive. Great stress has been laid upon the language in which Junius spoke of Luttrell. 'He has degraded even the name of Luttrell.' 'A family on which nature seems to have entailed a hereditary baseness of disposition.' Macaulay says that to the great majority of English readers such language must have been unintelligible, and he explains it by the fact that 'Philip Francis was born and passed the first ten years of his life within a walk of Luttrellstown' (*Hist. of England*, ch. xvii.). I quite agree with Mr. Hayward (*More about Junius*, pp. 57, 58) that this argument is worthless. Residence in a great town like Dublin is not likely to give much knowledge of families living seven miles away. Francis left Dublin when he was a child, and in a fiercely contested election every family scandal that could be raked up against the unpopular candidate was sure to become known.

competitors is at once removed.[1] The number of persons who possessed the kind of official knowledge which he exhibited was not large, and every rival claim has either been met by some insuperable objection, or has fallen from want of positive support. The evidence pointing to Francis has been continually growing, and it may be safely affirmed that no material or intellectual objection to the theory of his authorship can be sustained.

The moral objections, however, to the Franciscan theory are real and serious; and anyone who adopts that theory must be prepared to admit that Junius was a much less honourable man than some writers have supposed. He must be prepared to admit that Junius was capable, under the impulse of personal or political resentment, of attacking with savage ferocity men who had been his benefactors or the benefactors of his family, and with whom he had lived on terms of friendship. He must be prepared to admit that he was equally capable of accepting great favours from men whom as an anonymous writer he had been holding up to the execration of the nation, and of associating with them on terms of intimate friendship. The father of Philip Francis had been one of the writers in the service of Bute, and the King had given him a living, a chaplaincy, an English and an Irish pension. Sir William Draper was an intimate friend of the family, and was in close correspondence with the elder Francis at the time when Junius was pursuing him with his most cutting attacks. Garrick was also a friend of his father, who had dedicated

[1] Several writers on the subject are very confident that they can also prove (chiefly by Junius's great anxiety that the galleries of the House of Parliament should be opened to strangers on particular nights) that he was not a member of either House of Parliament, but I confess that to my own mind there appears no evidence of any real value on the matter. See, however, *Junius Identified*, pp. 130–133. Parkes and Merivale, ii. 532, 533.

to him a play. It may, indeed, be said in extenuation that Francis had adopted opposite politics from his father; that he was only drawn reluctantly and in self-defence into a controversy with Draper; that he suspected Garrick of making inquiries into a secret which it was of vital importance to him to preserve. But what can be said of his wanton attack upon Welbore Ellis, to whom Francis partly owed his situation in the War Office, with whom he was long after on terms of intimate friendship, and whom Junius described as 'the most contemptible little piece of machinery in the whole kingdom'? What, above all, can be said of his attack upon Calcraft, of whom Junius writes that he 'riots in the plunder of the army, and has only determined to be a patriot when he could not be a peer'? Nearly two years before this attack the elder Francis had described Calcraft to his son as 'the man to whom I am indebted for all your happiness, and for almost all I myself enjoy.' He was the warmest, the most intimate friend of Philip Francis, and he had laboured strenuously to secure his promotion at the War Office. Until the death of Calcraft in 1772, Francis continued in close friendship with him. By a codicil to his will Calcraft left him a legacy of 1,000*l.*, with an annuity of 250*l.* for his wife, and charged his executors to bring Francis into Parliament.[1] The case of Lord Barrington is little less striking. We have seen the unmeasured ferocity with which Junius, under other names, assailed that nobleman at the time of the appointment of Chamier; and it is certain, on the Franciscan theory, that Francis then considered himself bitterly aggrieved, though it appears from his letters that he parted from Barrington on terms of perfect civility, and that he professed to his friends that he left the War Office at his own wish. He

[1] See on the relations of Francis to Calcraft, Parkes and Merivale, i. 282–288.

appears, however, soon to have found that Barrington had no real ill-will towards him. A little more than two years after the letters of Veteran had appeared, Francis solicited an Indian appointment of 10,000*l.* a year from Lord North, the favourite minister of the King, and he obtained it at the special recommendation of Lord Barrington,[1] with whom he ever after was on terms of warm friendship.[2] It may be added that when, in 1787, he was accused of acting dishonourably in accepting the position of manager in the impeachment of his personal enemy Warren Hastings, he publicly defended himself by declaring that he had consulted and obtained the approval of Sir W. Draper, than whom 'there could not be a stricter or more scrupulous judge of points of honour.'[3]

The picture is not an edifying, some have contended that it is not a possible, one. With this view I cannot concur. Of all the professions that have grown up under the conditions of modern society, anonymous writing is perhaps that in which it is most difficult to maintain a high standard of honour, for it is that in which dishonourable acts may be committed with the greatest impunity. The organ which throws the blaze of publicity on all around may be itself an asylum of impenetrable secrecy, and the power of writing without fear of detection attracts many who would once have found a congenial sphere for their talents in the baser forms of political conspiracy and intrigue. An anonymous Press enables such men to strike in the dark

[1] In his fragment of autobiography he says, speaking of his Indian appointment, 'Barrington was gone to Court. I saw him the next morning. As soon as I had explained everything to him, he wrote the handsomest and strongest letter imaginable in my favour to Lord North. Other interests contributed, but I owe my success to Lord Barrington.' —Parkes and Merivale, i. 324, 325.

[2] Ibid. pp. 328–330.

[3] Ibid. p. 227.

without fear and without shame, to gratify private malice under the mask of public duty, to spread abroad calumnious falsehoods and venomous insinuations without incurring the risk or the discredit of exposure, to follow the impulses, passions, or interests of the hour without regard either to the past or to the future. It does not appear to me that there was anything in the character either of Junius or of Francis to render it impossible that they should abuse this power to the utmost. If the letters of Poplicola and of Antisejanus have been rightly attributed to Junius, we must believe that in 1767, when he suspected Chatham of subservience to Bute, he denounced him as 'a man purely and perfectly bad,' 'a traitor,' and 'a villain,' worthy of the Tarpeian Rock or of a gibbet;[1] that a few months later, for the purpose of attaining a political end, he wrote privately to him expressing the 'sentiment of respect and veneration' he had 'always' entertained for his character,[2] and that he afterwards made him the subject of his warmest public eulogy. Even apart from this incident the facts which have been stated in the last few pages are surely sufficient to show how little Junius can be regarded as a man of scruples, truthfulness, or honour. And if we turn to the acknowledged writings of Francis the probability is greatly strengthened. No single fact is more conspicuous in the

[1] Woodfall's *Junius*, ii. 451–467. The following passage in a letter of Antisejanus is eminently in the style of Junius. 'I will not censure him for the avarice of a pension, nor the melancholy ambition of a title. These were objects which he perhaps looked up to, though the rest of the world thought them far beneath his acceptance. But to become the stalking-horse of a stallion; to shake hands with a Scotchman at the hazard of catching all his infamy; to fight under his auspices against the Constitution, and to receive the word from him, prerogative, and a thistle (by the once respected name of Pitt); it is even below contempt.'—P. 467.

[2] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 302–305.

character of Francis than the manner in which he continually quarrelled with those from whom he had received benefits, and his writings are full of disparaging and injurious remarks about men with whom he had lived on terms of the closest intimacy, and to whom he should have been bound by strong ties of gratitude.[1] The most powerful moral objection to the Franciscan authorship of Junius is the attack upon Calcraft. At the time it was penned Francis was in close intimacy with Calcraft, but he could not yet know that touching proof of the fidelity of his friendship which was furnished by his will. But long after Calcraft was in his grave Francis wrote the fragment of autobiography which has been discovered among his papers, and the following are the terms in which he speaks of the man who was his constant benefactor, and who was supposed to have been his warmest friend. 'Calcraft undoubtedly owed his rapid fortune to Mr. Fox's patronage. He was the son of an attorney at Grantham, and went to London literally to seek his fortune. At the age of six-and-forty he had a landed estate, the rent-roll of which was above 10,000*l.* a year. In his quarrel with Lord Holland I think he had as much reason on his side as an interested man can have for deserting an old friend and benefactor. There was not virtue in either of them to justify their quarrelling. If either of them had had common honesty he could never have been the friend of the other.'[2]

[1] The following is the testimony of Merivale on this subject. 'One friend, supporter, patron, and colleague after another—Kinnoul, Chatham, Robert Wood, Calcraft, D'Oyly, Clavering, Fowke, Coote, Fox, the Prince of Wales—those who had wished well to him, defended him, showered benefits on him, appear at last in his written records branded with some unfriendly or contemptuous notice, some insinuated or pronounced aspersion, ungrateful at best, but treacherous also, if, as has been already conjectured, he meant those records to be known some day to the world.'—Parkes and Merivale, ii. 415, 416.

[2] Parkes and Merivale, i. 359.

The great progress of the Press, both in literary merit and in political importance, is one of the most remarkable characteristics of the period we are reviewing. Within ten years of the publication of the letters of Junius, three newspapers which played a considerable political part long after the Reform Bill of 1832, were called into existence. The 'Morning Chronicle' was established in 1770, the 'Morning Post' in 1772, and the 'Morning Herald' in 1780.[1] The great interest excited by the judgments of Mansfield, and by the Press cases which he decided, is said to have first led to the publication in newspapers of full legal reports.[2] Soon after, John Bell, the proprietor of the 'World' and of the 'Morning Post,' introduced newspaper dramatic criticism, and newspapers began to send their regular reporters to the pit.[3] In 1776 Lord North raised the stamp from 1*d.* to 1½*d.*, but the measure does not appear to have seriously impeded the progress of the Press. In 1777 there were no less than seventeen papers published in London, seven of which were daily, and in the following year appeared Johnson's 'Sunday Monitor,' the first Sunday paper in England.[4]

But the most important fact in this period of newspaper history was the virtual conquest of the right of parliamentary reporting. William Woodfall, a relative of the printer of the 'Public Advertiser,' had paid great attention to the subject of reporting, and full reports of the more important speeches were becoming common in the newspapers. These reports were distinctly contrary to a standing order of the House. As might be expected from the manner in which they were composed

---

[1] Wright's *House of Hanover*, ii. 373.

[2] Campbell's *Life of Mansfield.*

[3] Foote's *Works*, i. xlv, xlvi. See too Foote's *Bankrupt*; Andrews' *Hist. of Journalism* i. 193.

[4] Andrews, i. 220.

they were very inaccurate and very partial, and they were in some respects much more audacious than those which had excited so much parliamentary indignation in the last reign. They were no longer confined to the recess of Parliament, but appeared when the members were still sitting. The names were sometimes given without disguise, and often indicated by grossly scurrilous nicknames. At the same time the irritation of the country against the House and the desire to make the proceedings of the representatives amenable to criticism were so great that it was dangerous to interfere with them. The City politicians resolved to make this the next subject of dispute, and for the last time Horne and Wilkes co-operated in the struggle.

It was in February 1771 that Colonel George Onslow brought before the House a complaint that two printers had misrepresented the speeches and reflected on several members of the House. The case was very flagrant, for Onslow himself had been designated as 'little cocking George,' 'the little scoundrel,' and 'that paltry, insignificant insect,' but the dangers of a new conflict at this time were so great that even the King, though violently opposed to all parliamentary reporting, recommended great caution,[1] and the same language was held by several leaders of the Opposition. The House, however, ordered the offending printers to be taken into custody; and as the Sergeant proved unable to execute the order, the House addressed the King to issue a proclamation offering a reward of 50*l.* for the capture of either of the delinquents.

The offence, however, still continued, and on the 12th of March Onslow brought in a new motion for proceeding against six other printers who had been guilty of it. It was determined to put down absolutely the

[1] *Correspondence of George III. and Lord North*, i. 57, 58.

practice of parliamentary reporting, and to declare open war with the Press. A few members, however, of the Rockingham and Chatham connections argued strenuously against this course, and although they were soon shown to be an inconsiderable minority they refused to desist. Probably for the first time in English parliamentary history the forms of the House were employed for the purpose of systematic obstruction. By repeated amendments and motions of adjournment the debate was protracted till past four in the morning, and the House was compelled to divide twenty-three times.[1] At last the majority triumphed. The six printers were ordered to attend, and the House was committed to a struggle with the Press.

Of the eight printers who were now under the ban of the House, one was already in custody by order of the House of Lords. A property case in which Lord Pomfret was defendant had recently been carried on appeal before that House, and owing probably to the social position of the defendant, the lay lords, instead of leaving the matter to the legal members, had very scandalously taken part in the division. Lord Pomfret was in high favour at Court, and accordingly the Lords of the Bedchamber had voted in his favour. Woodfall and another printer had censured their conduct, and for this offence had been thrown into prison.[2] Of the other printers four appeared when summoned by the Commons, but Thompson and Wheble, who were the two printers first incriminated, and Miller, who was one of the others, resolved to defy the jurisdiction of the House. Wilkes and Horne, though now at enmity, appeared to have independently instigated this resistance. On March 14 Wheble addressed a letter to the Speaker inclosing an

[1] *Annual Register*, 1771, pp. 62, 63. The minorities ranged from 55 to 10, and the majorities from 143 to 70.

[2] Walpole's *George III.* iv. 284-286.

opinion of counsel, and declaring that he was resolved to 'yield no obedience but to the laws of the land,' and next day both Wheble and Thompson were collusively arrested by fellow-printers and brought before two aldermen who were sitting separately to try cases. One of these aldermen was Wilkes himself; the other was his brother politician Oliver. Wilkes and Oliver at once discharged the prisoners as guilty of no legal offence, and Wilkes bound over Wheble to prosecute his captors for assault and false imprisonment, and he also wrote to the Secretary of State informing him that a man who was charged with no offence against the law of the land had been illegally arrested by virtue of a royal proclamation, in violation of the common rights of Englishmen as well as of the chartered privileges of the City of London. The two men who had made the arrest claimed the reward offered in the proclamation, but the Government being convinced that they had acted on an understanding with the culprits, refused to pay it.

Nearly at the same time a messenger of the House of Commons attempted to arrest Miller in his own house, but Miller at once sent for a constable and gave the messenger into custody. Both parties were taken to the Mansion House, where Crosby, the Lord Mayor, accompanied by Wilkes and Oliver, proceeded to try the case. The Deputy-Sergeant-at-Arms attended on the part of the Speaker, and in the name of the House of Commons peremptorily ordered that both messenger and printer should be delivered up to him. The Lord Mayor, in reply, asked whether the Speaker's warrant by which Miller had been arrested had been backed by a City magistrate. As the answer was in the negative he decided that it was illegal, for the charters of the City provided that no warrant, attachment, or process could be executed within it except by its own magis-

trates. The demand of the Deputy-Sergeant was refused. Miller was discharged from custody, and the messenger of the House of Commons was committed to prison, but admitted to bail on his own application.

It was quite evident that another conflict of the most embarrassing nature had arisen. The royal proclamation which was issued to support a standing order of the House of Commons, was of very doubtful legality, and a serious conflict had sprung up between the jurisdiction of the House and the jurisdiction of the City. The right of the House of Commons to enforce its own standing order against reporting by committing those who refused to obey it, cannot reasonably be disputed, but it had unexpectedly come into collision with another jurisdiction, which the Lord Mayor was bound by his oath of office to protect. The excitement produced by the Middlesex election had not yet subsided, and the House of Commons found itself again confronted by an agitator of whose singular audacity and address it had already ample experience. At the same time it was now impossible to recede. The printers whose arrest had been ordered were at large, and the 'Society for the Support of the Bill of Rights' voted each of them 100*l.* for having 'appealed to the law of the land, and not betrayed by submission the rights of Englishmen.' The messenger of the House of Commons was threatened with prosecution for having obeyed the orders of the House, and he would have been in prison had he not reluctantly consented to give bail. The King wrote indignantly to Lord North that the 'authority of the House of Commons is totally annihilated if it is not in an exemplary manner supported to-morrow by instantly committing the Lord Mayor and Alderman Oliver to the Tower.' 'As to Wilkes,' he added, 'he is below the notice of the House,' and he showed an amusingly significant and

sagacious wish to separate him, if possible, from the proceedings against his coadjutors.[1]

The Lord Mayor and Oliver, who were members of the House, were successively ordered to attend in their places, and Wilkes at the Bar of the House. Wilkes at once wrote a reply, declaring that he was the legitimate member for Middlesex, that he was ready to attend in his place in Parliament, but that he absolutely refused to appear at the Bar. The Lord Mayor and Oliver duly attended, and the former defended himself with great dignity and simplicity, alleging his oath of office which obliged him to preserve inviolate the franchises of the City, the charters of the City which secured the citizens from any law process being served upon them except by their own officers, and the confirmation of those charters by Act of Parliament. The House, as usual, speedily put itself in the wrong. The arrest and bailing of the messenger was the grievance which was most sensibly felt, and the Lord Mayor's clerk was accordingly commanded to attend with the book of minutes, and by order of the House the recognizance of the messenger of the House was erased. The conduct of the House of Commons in thus expunging by its sole authority a judicial record for the purpose of arresting the ordinary course of the law, was justly designated by Chatham as 'the act of a mob and not of a senate,' and most of the members of the Opposition protested against it by leaving the House. The House at the same time ordered that the threatened prosecution of the messenger should not be proceeded with. It had no right or power to take such a course, and accordingly the messenger was duly indicted, and only saved by the

[1] *Letters of George III. to Lord North*, i. 64–67. He said very shrewdly that Wilkes must soon get into prison for debt, if some measure was not speedily taken to revive his popularity.

nolle prosequi of the Attorney-General. The House granted, after long discussion and vacillation, the demand of the Lord Mayor to be heard by counsel, but added the condition that nothing must be said against the privileges of the House, which, as the sole question at issue was the extent of these privileges, rendered the concession a palpable mockery.

Junius lost no time in summing up the proceedings of the Commons with his usual felicitous terseness. 'In their first resolutions [against the printers] it is possible that they might have been deceived by ill-considered precedents. For the rest there is no colour of palliation or excuse. They have advised the King to resume a power of dispensing with the laws by royal proclamation, and kings, we see, are ready enough to follow such advice. By mere violence, and without the shadow of right, they have expunged the record of a judicial proceeding. Nothing remained but to attribute to their own vote a power of stopping the whole distribution of criminal and and civil justice.'[1] The illness of the Lord Mayor caused some delay in the proceedings of the House, and in the meantime the strong popular feeling was clearly shown. The Lord Mayor's carriage was again and again drawn through the streets by an enthusiastic populace, who accompanied him wherever he passed, invaded the lobbies of the House of Commons, and repeated all the scenes of riot which had so lately followed the Middlesex election. The carriages of several of the leading supporters of the Ministry were attacked and broken; Lord North very narrowly escaped with his life, and the King was hissed in the streets. The Lord Mayor and Oliver were at length committed to the Tower, but their residence there was one continued triumph.

[1] Woodfall's *Junius*, ii. 219, 220.

Addresses expressing admiration for their conduct poured in from every side. The leading members of the Opposition, in a procession of sixteen carriages, went to the Tower to visit them. A great mob, attended by a hearse, beheaded and burnt on Tower Hill figures representing the Princess Dowager, Lord Bute, and the leading opponents of the printers in both Houses; and when at length, after six weeks' detention, the Lord Mayor and Oliver were released by the prorogation, they were saluted by twenty-one cannon belonging to the Artillery Company, and escorted to the Mansion House by an immense crowd of enthusiastic admirers. That night London was illuminated, and the windows of the Speaker of the House of Commons were broken by the mob.

The most significant part, however, of the transaction was the manner in which the House of Commons cowered before Wilkes. He had lost no opportunity of defying it, and he was the soul of the whole movement of opposition. Three times the House summoned him to appear at the Bar, and three times he disobeyed. At last the House put an ignominious end to the contest by ordering him to attend on a day when it was itself adjourned.[1] The printers meanwhile remained at liberty, and from this time reports of the proceedings of the House of Commons were tacitly permitted. In the Lords the prohibition was maintained a little longer, but the example of the Commons was soon silently followed. The nation was thus enabled systematically to study and to judge the proceedings of its representatives, and the Press made another gigantic stride in political importance.

The growth of the Press as a great power in English politics is perhaps the most momentous of all the events

[1] *Parl. Hist.* xvii. 164.

of the period we are considering. It is not too much to say that it has modified the political life as profoundly as steam in the present century has altered the economical condition of England. Side by side with the recognised Constitution another representative system has grown up, in which the various wants, aspirations, and opinions of the nation are reflected with at least equal accuracy; another debating organ in which political questions are so fully discussed that the debates of Parliament are frequently little more than its echo. On great occasions parliamentary discussion is usually more searching and complete than discussion in the newspapers, but on most minor questions the palm of superiority must, I think, be conceded to the latter. Of all the instruments which human wisdom has devised, a free Press is the most efficacious in putting an end to jobs, abuses, political malversation and corruption. A public writer has strong motives to expose these things, and except in very rare cases he has no motive to conceal them. They wither beneath the blaze of publicity which is thrown on all the details of administration, on the discontents and grievances of every class of the community. The newspaper press not only reflects the many phases and modifications of public opinion, it also gives it an irresistible volume and momentum. Organising, directing, intensifying, and sometimes creating it, bringing the ablest leaders speedily to the surface, adding immensely to the facilities of co-operation, diffusing the popular arguments with unparalleled rapidity and over an enormous area, repeating them day by day till they have become familiar to all classes, and watching with an unceasing vigilance the smallest encroachment of power, it has strengthened immeasurably the spirit and resources of liberty, and has made dangers which once appeared very imminent wholly chimerical. It at the same time

makes it impossible for any man of ordinary intelligence to live exclusively the life of a class or of a province. It brings before him with some degree of vividness the modes of life and thought and reasoning of all classes of his countrymen, and on great occasions it arouses the national passions with a strange velocity and power. It is the most efficacious of all means of political education. Thousands who would scarcely read anything else find in it a source of perpetual interest. The highest special knowledge is poured into its columns, and it raises enormously the average of political information, intelligence, and capacity.

It is difficult to over-estimate these services, and few persons will deny that, in England at least, they outweigh the evils which the abuses of the Press have produced. Whether they do so everywhere is less certain, and the magnitude of those evils is usually underrated by those who judge exclusively from English experience. Nowhere else in free governments do we find so large an amount of power divorced from responsibility. A very few men, who are altogether unconnected with the official business of the State, who are personally unknown to the nation, whose position is entirely self-constituted and peculiarly exposed to sinister influences, often succeed in acquiring by the Press a greater influence than most responsible statesmen. They constitute themselves the mouthpiece and the representatives of the nation, and they are often accepted as such throughout Europe. They make it their task to select, classify, and colour the information, and to supply the opinions of their readers; and as comparatively few men have the wish, or the time, or the power to compare evidence and weigh arguments, they dictate absolutely the conclusions of thousands. If they cannot altogether make opinion, they can at least exaggerate, bias, and inflame it. They can give its

particular forms a wholly factitious importance; and while there are very few fields of labour in which the prolonged exercise of brilliant talent produces so little personal reputation, there are also very few in which exceedingly moderate abilities may exercise so wide an influence.

Few things to a reflecting mind are more curious than the extraordinary weight which is attached to the anonymous expression of political opinion. Partly by the illusion of the imagination, which magnifies the hidden representative of a great corporation—partly by the weight of emphatic assertion, a plural pronoun, conspicuous type, and continual repetition, unknown men, who would probably be unable to induce any constituency to return them to Parliament, are able, without exciting any surprise or sense of incongruity, to assume the language of the accredited representatives of the nation, and to rebuke, patronise, or insult its leading men with a tone of authority which would not be tolerated from the foremost statesmen of their time. It was the theory of the more sanguine among the early free-traders that under the system of unrestricted competition all things would rank according to their real merits. In that case the power and popularity of a newspaper would depend mainly upon the accuracy and amount of its information, the force of its arguments, the fidelity with which it represented the dominant opinion of the nation. But anyone who will impartially examine the newspapers that have acquired the greatest circulation and influence in Europe and in America, may easily convince himself of the falseness of this theory. A knack of clever writing, great enterprise in bringing together the kind of information which amuses or interests the public, tact in catching and following the first symptoms of change of opinions, a skilful pandering to popular prejudice; malevolent gossip, sensa-

tional falsehood, coarse descriptions, vindictive attacks on individuals, nations, or classes, are the elements of which many great newspaper ascendencies have been mainly built. Newspaper writing is one of the most open of all professions, but some of the qualities that are most successful in it do not give the smallest presumption either of moral worth or of political competence or integrity.

It is a strange thing, though custom has made it very familiar, that so large a part of the formation and representation of political opinion should be a commercial speculation. Many papers have no doubt been set up solely to advocate particular causes and interests, and have discharged their task with admirable disinterestedness and integrity. But these are not usually the papers which have acquired the widest popularity and success. A newspaper, as such, is and must be a commercial speculation, with interests in many respects coincident, in some respects directly clashing with the true interests of the nation. Considered commercially, its popularity is the condition and the measure of its success, and it is a matter of perfect indifference from what source that popularity is derived. It must write down to the level of its readers. Its business is not to improve them but to please them. If a vicious style, if coarse, vulgar, or immoral descriptions, if personal slander or class attacks are widely popular, it is the commercial interest of the newspaper to gratify the taste, and by gratifying, it immeasurably increases it. Day after day, week after week, the impression is deepened, the taste is strengthened. No such powerful instrument as a corrupt Press has ever been discovered for vulgarising the national mind, for lowering the moral sense, for deepening, stimulating, and perpetuating class hatreds or national animosities. Most modern wars may be ultimately traced to national anti-

pathies which have been largely created by newspaper invectives and by the gross partiality of newspaper representations. As the writers have no part in the dangers, while, by the increased circulation of their papers, they reap a large harvest from the excitement of war, they have a direct interest in producing it. Wherever there is some vicious spot, some old class hatred, some lingering provincial antipathy, a newspaper will arise to represent and to inflame it. In countries where class animosities are deep and savage, or where the form of government is still unsettled and contested, it is extremely difficult to reconcile an unshackled Press with national stability and security. The most plausible argument of the opponents of national education is the fact that in many countries it is tolerably certain that one of the chief forms of reading of the poor will consist of newspapers written for the express purpose of playing upon their most odious passions.

It was one of the felicities of English history that the Press only rose to great political importance when the troubles of a disputed succession had completely subsided; and although it is impossible to feel much respect for those who conducted it in the days of Wilkes and of Junius, they undoubtedly rendered a most important service to their country. In the early years of George III., and especially about the year 1770, there was grave danger that under the system of parliamentary government the Crown would regain all, or nearly all, the power it had lost by the Revolution. The Opposition was broken, divided, defeated. The King and the King's friends had succeeded in disintegrating the old parties in the State, in sapping the aristocratical power which was once the most formidable barrier to their designs, in disposing for their own objects of the vast fields of Government patronage, in

forming a great permanent interest and acquiring an overwhelming majority in both Houses of Parliament. The Scotch, the bishops, the numerous members of both Houses who held Court offices, steadily voted together, and the ranks of the King's friends were speedily recruited by place-hunters drawn from the different connections. The elective system was so corrupt, the influence of the Treasury on the boroughs was so great, the Government patronage was so vast and so redundant, that there seemed every prospect of the continuance of their power. The immediate causes of their defeat are to be found chiefly in the growth of a free Press, which gave a new strength and energy to the popular movement for reform, and in the overwhelming discredit which the disastrous termination of the American War threw upon the ministry which had conducted it. The earlier phases of the American movement I have already very cursorily indicated. I shall now proceed to examine that movement in some detail, and to estimate its vast and various influence upon the fortunes of England.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

Lecky, William E 942.07
L461h
(A) History of England
in the eighteenth 122983
cent

Lecky, William E 942.07
AUTHOR L461h
(A) History of England
TITLE in the
eighteenth century, v.3 122983

DATE DUE	BORROWER'S NAME

UPSALA COLLEGE LIBRARY
EAST ORANGE, NEW JERSEY 07019

DEMCO

W9-DCY-699